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True Faith will Produce Good work

Mr. *Backus's*

DISCOURSE

On Faith and its Influence, &c.

M. Bouchis

DISCOURSE

True Faith will produce good Works.

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DISCOURSE,

Wherein are opened

The Nature of Faith, and its powerful Influence on the Heart and Life: together with the contrary Nature and Effects of Unbelief: And Answers to various Objections.

To which are Prefixed

A brief View of the present State of the Protestant World, with some Remarks on the Writings of Mr. *Sandeman*.

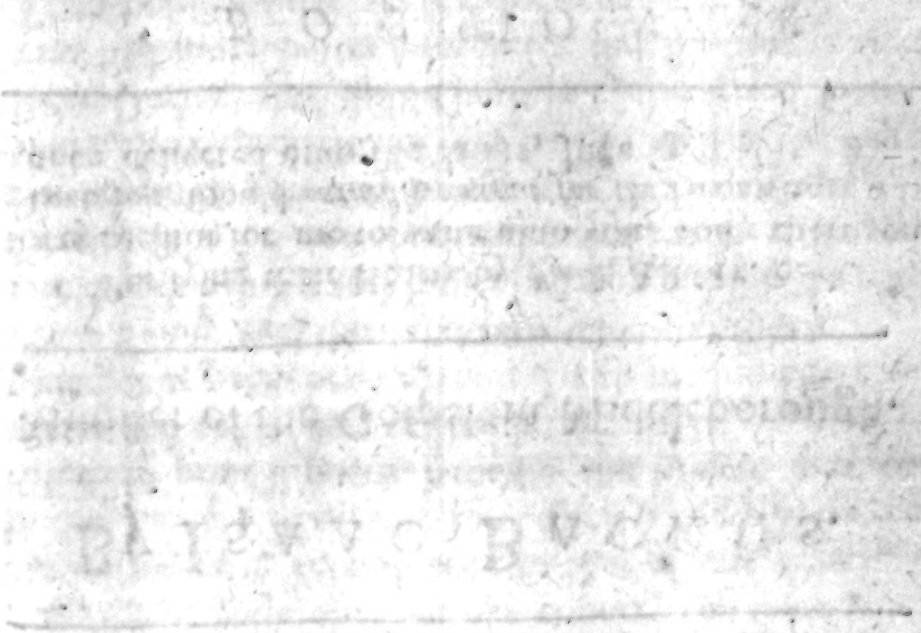
By ISAAC BACKUS.

Minister of the Gospel in Middleborough.

Purifying their Hearts by *Faith*, Act. 15. 9.
It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that you should *earnestly contend for the Faith* which was once delivered unto the Saints, Jude 3.

BOSTON:

Printed by D. KNEELAND, for PHILIP FREEMAN, opposite the Cornfields in Union-Street. 1767.



The Introduction, containing a brief View of the preſent State of the Proteſtant World; with ſome particular *Remarks* on the Writings of Mr. *Sandeman*.

WHEN men ſee a new book, 'tis natural for them to enquire the occaſion of its appearance, eſpecially now when the world is ſo full of them. The requeſt of friends is a common excuſe, and may truly be alledged here; yet that is not the chief motive. And what encouragement can the preſent face of things give to ſuch a work as this? For the language of bookſellers in our country for ſome years has born a near reſemblance to that of one deſcribed in the *London* Magazine for *April* 1763. Who refuſed to print a poem, becauſe the ſubject was too moral and religious; and ſaid,

"Had your poem been garniſh'd with modiſh chit chat,
How Fanny ſaid this, and how Cloe did that;
Lac'd with baudry and ſmut, had you publiſh'd a play,
I could ſell off two thouſand at leaſt the firſt day.
For whate'er you may fancy, you live in an age,
When the church do not pay half ſo well as the ſtage;
Dear Doctor, tho' ſkill'd both in Hebrew and Greek,
You had much better preach for five Shillings a week
Than publiſh ſuch verſe—for whatever is in't,
It *ſerious*, it ne'er pays for paper and print".

Yet

Yet (ſtrange as it may ſeem) a heart affecting view of this deep ſleep which we are fallen into, is the principle motive to this attempt, towards ſtiring ſouls up to a living and practical regard to divine truth: The neglect whereof has brought this lethergy upon us. And while it was coming on, various things have diverted our minds from a ſenſe of our danger. Sometimes our thoughts were prying into *futurities*, to the neglect of *preſent* living unto God; and then every thing that could be met with of a *prophetical* nature was publiſhed and ſpread: Not only ſuch as were ſerious calculations or conjectures from ſcripture, but alſo romantic viſions and dreams. At other times, witty or angry *controverſy* employed our minds in various ſhapes: yea, inſtead of living by faith as we ought, many have contended (as hard as *Job* and his friends did) about what *faith is*.

And I believe *counſel* has been *darkned with words without knowledge*, as much in *this* controverſy as in *that*. As long as *Job* view'd God in all that befel him, he did not *ſin with his lips*; but when he turned to diſpute with his friends, each party miſapplied excellent truths, and retorted their miſtaken concluſions till their ſpirits were wearied out: yet when the Lord appeared he made them all aſham'd of their conduct; and doubtleſs his appearance now would have the ſame effect upon ſome of our late diſputants. The neglect of right conduct in many who have made great profeſſions of faith, has given occaſion for the builders on works to exert themſelves afreſh; and the writings of a religious nature which have had the moſt current ſpread in this land for ſome years paſt, were ſuch as, under a pretence of promoting morality and good order, have been levelled againſt many of the

peculiar

peculiar doctrines of christianity; yea some of them even against the true deity of its great author.

In the mean time we have one * who makes a shew of appearing for those great doctrines, and to stir people up to look into them, that yet has artfully mixed such a *potion*, as tends to settle men in a dead sleep. And since his writings have been a means of hardning many in iniquity, and of entangling or perplexing some serious minds, I shall attempt to point out some pernicious principles, which he has interspersed among many choice truths.

He has set down a charming description, of the Apostle's manner of preaching in these terms, viz. "As they exhibit no allurements to the passions of "men; so neither do they enter into any parly of cap-"tulation with his presumptuous reasonings; but "storming and demolishing these, they press forward "to his conscience, charge him before God, and con-"verse with him there. They clear up, and present "in a striking view before him, the half-defaced rea-"sons of duty, naturally imprinted in his heart, and "shew at once, how unsuitable to them his thoughts "and actions have been. They unshakle his con-"science, and make it speak out, and, with the bright-"est demonstration, enforce every thing it speaks. "And while they shut up all his imagined sources of "light and hope, they furnish him with a supernatural "reason of hope stamped with the divine character." †

Such

* Mr. *Robert Sandeman*, who came from *Scotland* in autumn 1764. and after travelling into various parts of the country he gathered a church at *Portsmouth*; but that was scattered last fall, and he has a small society now in *Boston*.

† Letters on Theron and Aspacio 3 Editon Vol. I. page 226.

Such fine paſſages as this, willinduce ſome to take down all that ſuch a writer ſays,almoſt without examination. But if we obſerve the divine caution, *Take heed what you hear*, we may ſoon find things of another nature; for the Apoſtles are dead, and this writer has raiſed a ſtately monument for them, and inſcribed thereon PAUL'S GOSPEL. And now he will not allow any man to call himſelf Chriſt's *ambaſſador*, and to *beſeech* ſouls in *Chriſt's ſtead to be reconciled to God*: * and for no better reaſon that I can find than this, viz. that many have abuſed that character ſince the Apoſtle's days. † Therefore now when one miniſter ſays to his hearers, "Let me tell you, the "Lord hath ſent me at this time to *proclaim liberty* "*to the captives* that are in this ſad, bitter, and (to "their thinking) deſperate condition; liberty God hath "given thee, if thou wilt come freely; nothing in "the world ſhall hinder thee". This author ſays that in this paſſage, "His lofty ſelf conceit may be ſeen". And when another miniſter expoſtulates with his hearers thus, "Can none of my exhortations, none "of my friendly intreaties prevail with you to "*rouſe up*, and look into your own hearts, and exa-"mine your ſtate and condition" &c. This man cries "obſerve with what dignity this gentleman *ſtruts* in "his pulpit". § And he concludes his book with this advice to his readers, viz. "After you have heard "the orthodox ſo plainly affirming, that juſtification "is an act of God's free grace,—ſuffer them not to "put the change upon you. Whenever they begin "to talk to you of any act you are to exert in order to

* 2. *Cor.* 5. 20.

† See Letters Vol. I. page 45. &c.

§ Letters Vol. 2. page 203, 204, 208.

" to acceptance, and call it a juſtifying act, which " you are to exert by the help of God's grace, be " you ready to reply, Avaunt; none of your tricks! " If you would preach goſpel to us, you muſt tell " us ſomething fit to give us joy as we preſently " ſtand unconſcious of any diſtinguiſhing qualifica- " tion".

Here reader, only look back to his deſcription of the Apoſtle's way of preaching the goſpel, and judge for thyſelf, if he does not teach ſinners to *gainſay* juſt ſuch preaching now as they delivered, when they " preſ- " ſed forward to the ſinners conſcience, charged him " before God, and converſed with him there; and " ſhut up all his imagined ſources of light and hope" while they called him to *believe in the Lord Jeſus and ye ſhall be ſaved*: yea he teacheth them to reſiſt ſuch preachers now as they would the devil, by crying, " Avaunt! none of your tricks"!

It is readily granted that this writer has pointed out many dark ſtrokes in the writings of our moſt noted divines; and if he could clear off all their miſtakes, he ſhould be as welcome thereto, as any *crow* could be to take all the *carrion* out of our pleaſant fields; but who would abandon their fruitful fields, becauſe ſome crow's meat was found there? Yet he bends all his wit this way; for after naming Mr. *Flavel*, the *Erſkine's* and many others, under the name of *popular preachers*, he ſays, " I would be far from " refuſing even to the popular preachers themſelves, " what they ſo much grudge to others, the benefit " of the one inſtance of an hardned ſinner finding " mercy at laſt: For I know of no ſinners more " hardened, none greater deſtroyers of mankind than

" they". * And afterwards, ſpeaking of the writings " of Meſſirs. *Guthrie*, *Marſhal*, *Boſton* and *Doddridge*, " he ſays, If any profane Perſon, who deſires to be " converted, ſhall take pains to enter into the ſpirit " of theſe books, it will be eaſy to ſhew, from the " new-teſtament, that he thereby becomes two-fold " more the child of hell than he was before" †. And he tells Mr. *P.* that he was " particularly fond" of theſe two paſſages; " Not (ſays he) that theſe " paſſages contain *any thing* but what is *aimed at* in " every page". Thus we happen to have his own account of what he *aimed at* thro' all his writings, even againſt ſuch as he allows do plainly enough ſet before " us *many* articles of the apoſtolic doctrine". Yea who " aſſert almoſt *all* the articles belonging to " the ſacred truth". ‡ Now compare this with what he ſays of others: " Many, ſays he, truſting in " themſelves, that they are more eminently godly " than others, look down with a ſolemn pride on " the reſt of mankind.—Many have their pride not " a little gratified, by *complaining* of the *defections* " of the church whereof they are members". Yet there is ſcarce one *proteſtant* author that he names without *complaining* of his *defections*; and where he could find nothing to *complain* of, he conceals their names; for he ſays, " I have as I found occaſion, " freely adopted the obſervations, and even the words " of the friends of the doctrine contained in theſe " ſheets, without ſeeing any neceſſity of quoting them or

* Letters on Theron &c. Vol. 2 page 138.

† Ibid page 191. Epiſtolary Correſpondence between S. P' and R. S. page 20.

‡ Letters Vol. 1. page 271 & Vol. 2. page 246. Vol. 2 page 194.

" or mentioning their names". But why not their names on one ſide as well as the other? Why he ſays " There was no attacking the popular doctrine " to any purpoſe, without making an *boneſt* eſſay to- " wards profaning the divinity of thoſe demi-gods"*

Now my dear friends, behold! this man is ſo *humble* that he exclaims aloud againſt every bodies *pride* but *his own*! and he is ſo *boneſt* that he exerts all his wit to expoſe the *nakedneſs* of *proteſtant fathers*; but adopts their *good obſervations*, while he conceals their names that they may paſs for his own!

Yet he would not have us think that he is moved to this conduct by the *prejudices* of *education*; becauſe he tells us he was trained up from his infancy under ſuch teaching, and long ſought to form his heart thereby: " But, ſays he I am far from thinking I ſay " any thing extravagant, or in the leaſt injurious to " my conſcience, when I affirm, that I might have " been as profitably employed, and even with as " much chriſtian piety, in attending the levee of the " lady of Loretto". Vol. 1 page 121.

Here obſerve, *Loretto* is a city in *Italy*, where *Roman Catholicks* ſay they have the *holy houſe* that the virgin *Mary* was born in, which they pretend was carried through the air from *Gallilee* by angels:— therefore many thouſands yearly reſort there, to pay their devotions to the *Ladies* image, with the infant on her arm. † So that he had as good have ſaid, " There is are profitable means to promote chriſtian " piety in attending the worſhip of the virgin *Mary*, " in the depths of *popery*, as there are under ſuch tea- " chers as Mr. *Boſton*, the *Erſkins*'s &c".

* Letters Vol. 2 page 245, 246.

† Univeſal Gazeteer at the word Loretto.

Let this be kept in mind, and we will turn and enquire what more profitable means are to be had under his teaching. If we aſk how a ſoul comes to believe in Chriſt, his reply is that "Faith comes not by "human endeavours, or the uſe of *any means*, even "under the *greateſt* advantages that men *can* enjoy". But ſays he, "The conveyance of the ſalutary truth "to them for their relief, as much prevents *every* "*motion* of their will,—as did the divine gracious "purpoſe before the world was". * Now what can have a more natural tendency to guard againſt a ſenſe of the guilt of unbelief, than this has? to illuſtrate his meaning he ſays, "Let us learn from the words of "Jeſus, how infants at the beginning of Life, and "how condemned fellons at the end of it, enter "into the kingdom of God. Thence we will ſee "how little account the deity makes of all the mighty buſtle of our thoughts thro' all the buſy ſcene "of life". †

In order to eſtabliſh his notion of theſe two caſes, he puts a falſe conſtruction upon others ſentiments concerning them. As to the firſt, he ſpeaks of ſome *diſſenters*, and afterwards of Dr. *Gill* by name, whom he repreſents as holding that adult perſons are intituled to baptiſm, and ſo to the kingdom of Heaven on account of ſomething which they *can do* more than infants towards *obtaining* a part therein. § Whereas that controverſy is not concerning what any can do towards *obtaining*, but 'tis about *manifeſting* their intereſt in the kingdom. We have no account who the parents of them children were which were brought to Jeſus, *Mat.* 19. 13, 14. Neither does he

* Letters Vol. 2 page 67. 136. † Ibid page 40.

§ Letters Vol. 2 page 41 105.

he ſay *all ſuch*, but *of ſuch* is the kingdom of Heaven. Mr. *S.* holds that * "juſtification comes to "a parent, and his houſe at the ſame time; and ſays, "The parent then believing, according to what is "ſpoken, is juſtified together with his houſe". If this were true, it would prove that parents *can do* a great deal for others, if not for themſelves. The text he refers to for the ſupport of this notion, aſſerts as fully that the *word* was *ſpoken to all that were in* the jailor's houſe, and that *all rejoiced believing in God*, as it does that *all* were *baptized*, Act. 16. 31—34. None ſpeaks more plainy againſt *national churches* than this author pretends to do; yet how vain are all ſuch pretences, while he holds things thus? For all know that families are the foundation of nations: the old *national church* all ſprang from one eminent believer.

Upon the other caſe viz. the *thief on the croſs*, he takes ſome paſſages from Meſſirs. *Flavel*, *Boſton*, and *Williſon*; wherein they warn ſouls againſt *neglecting* the *great ſalvation* becauſe of that inſtance of one who found mercy at the laſt: and becauſe they ſay, that was an *extraordinary* time, ſuch as will not happen again, and that the thief never had an offer of grace before. This author, catching at ſuch expreſſions, *metamorphoſeth* their diſcourſe, till he would make their meaning to be "That the pardoned ſin-"ner had extraordinary merit, namely, of the nega-"tive kind, yea, that he had within him a very live-"ly ſpark of goodneſs"; and ſtrains it even to this, that, "extraordinary mercy was, upon an extraor-"dinary occaſion, ſhewn to extraordinary worth". † And having changed their meaning in ſuch a wretched manner, he then compares them to *Proteus*, who, the

* Epiſtolory Coreſpond. page 30. † Vol. 2 p. 46, 47.

the *poets* ſaid would *change his ſhape at his pleaſure*, And then brings in ſome of the moſt falſe ſentiments he could find on that ſubject; and ſo ſpends *eighteen* pages, and all to try to make out his poſition, "That the deity makes little account of our thoughts "thro' all the buſy ſcene of life".

Yet Jehovah calls the *heavens* and *earth* to *give ear* to what he *hath ſpoken*, becauſe his people *doth* not CONSIDER Iſai. 1. 2, 3. The reaſon this man gives why theſe divines cannot mean right, is that it can never do to ſay, a perſon delays believing a teſtimony now, in hopes of finding it to be true hereafter: and ſo ridicules the notion of men's delaying their faith. But God's word informs us that when *Felix* heard *Paul concerning the faith in Chriſt*; ſo that truth madehim *tremble*, and his immediate anſwer was, *go thy way for this time.* And as we are expreſly told that *faith comes by hearing*; ſo the danger of *neglecting* it, is often warned againſt in theſe terms, *To day if ye will hear his voice hardned not your hearts.* And though he treats them with contempt for holding forth that the thief had not outſtood ſuch calls as preſumptuous ſinners now do! yet *Paul* ſays, *I obtained mercy becauſe* I ſinned IGNORANTLY, *in unbelief.* 1 Tim. 1. 13.

At the ſame time this writer would be ſo far, from being accounted an enemy to good works, that he gives it as *Paul's* mind, intimated to true Chriſtians," that "they could not warrantably be aſſured of their happy ſtate by any exerciſe of mind, without the ſelf "denied *works* of obedience." And he takes pains to diſtinguiſh between the aſſurance of faith, and the aſſurance of hope, and refers the firſt to the *truth* believed, the other to our *intereſt* therein. And he ſays, "No man can be charged with the ſin of diſbelieving "the goſpel for *doubting* if he be a good Chriſtian:

"his

" his chief hazard lies on the other side." Of the assurance of faith he says, " They obtain it without their " using any endeavours in search of it:— whereas " the assurance of hope is enjoyed *only* by those who " give all diligence to obtain it." * Now compare this with his essay to detect others *artifice*, in confounding grace and works together, where he says, " Must " we not say, that all the good works which shall be " recompenced at the resurruction of the just are pro- " duced by the influence of the divine Spirit dwelling " in the hearts of those who believe? yet such is " the connection betwixt every good work and its " reward, that according to scripture, the *justice* of " God, not to say his *grace*, is concerned to make it " good." †

Were this true then, he that gives all diligence to perform the *self denied works of obedience*, and so obtains the *assurance of hope*; God's *justice*, not to say his grace, would be concerned to *reward* him for those *good works* at the *resurrection of the just*. Whereas according to the gospel, *justice* is as much concerned to *forgive* the penitent, and to *cleanse* him from all *unrighteousness*, as to reward his good works: 'Tis all thro' *grace* in Christ Jesus, *Rom.* 5. 17. 1 *John* 1. 9. *Rev.* 8. 3, 4.

Tho' this author abounds with *criticism*, yet this, and other scriptural *distinctions* he labours to explode. As, 1. The distinction between *doctrinal* and *experimental* knowledge; between right *notions* of truth in the *head*, and *knowing* them in the *heart*. When Mr. *P.* had professed a full concurrence with his sentiments concerning faith, and then made an attempt to explain his definition of it, as " a *bare* belief of " the *bare* report of the gospel", so as to make it mean

* Letters Vol. 2 page 140, 141. † Ibid page 96.

mean more " than what is commonly called a *specu-* " *lative, notional*, or *dead* faith" : Mr. *S.* replys, that " any attempt to render my language on this head " leſs offenſive, is enough to alarm me and awaken " ſuſpicion". Epiſt. Correſpond. page 62. And tho' Mr. *P.* expreſſed his thankfulneſs for the help he had received from our author's writings to *clear his views*, and *relieve his mind* ; yet becauſe he adds his perſuaſion that he had, " truely known and preached, truſ- " ted and loved the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for many " years", and therefore could not join in his *ſeverity* againſt other *preachers* and *writers* ; Mr. *S.* tries hard to detect Mr. *P.* of *hypocriſy*, and concludes that there *muſt be* ſome *defect* or *miſtake* in his faith, tho' he could not *pretend* to *point out* wherein it lay, p. 61. But if this diſtinction was excluded, how would it ſtrengthen the *deiſts* when they hear Jeſus declare to his diſciples that they *knew*, what they aſſerted that they did *not know* ; *Joh.* 14 4—9. The glory of God in the face of Chriſt had ſhined into their *heart*, tho' they had not as yet, diſtinct notions thereof in their *heads*. And tho' they truly believed in him as the *way to the Father, yet they knew not the ſcripture, that he muſt riſe again from the dead*, John 20. 9. But after he aroſe, he *opened their underſtandings*, ſo that they could diſtinctly and boldly preach the *forgiveneſs of ſins*, to *Jews* who are gathered from *among all nations* Luk. 24 45. —47. Act. 2. Yet ſtill it was a long time before they had ſo much head knowledge as to preach this goſpel freely to the *gentiles*. All which ſhews that diſtinct notions in the head, and a knowing the truth in the heart are quite different things.

2 Mr. *S.* makes no juſt diſtinction between a *ſlaviſh* and a *child like fear*, but labours to confound them together. He declares that no fixed judgment

can

can be formed of *any* man's ſtate, but a patient continuance in *well doing to the end.* " No mortal, " ſays he, can attain any ſuch aſſurance of hope " but that he ſtill finds himſelf occaſionally in hazard " of loſing it". page 85. And he aſſerts that one " can ſcarce do a greater hurt to profeſſors, than by " indulging them in the thought that they are at bot- " tom poſſeſſed of ſome inherent *good principle*". " A teacher, ſays he, runs no riſk of exceeding in " urging the motives to *fear*". page 92. But *Paul* ſays, ye have not received the ſpirit of *bondage again to fear*: And *Zacharias* bleſſed God that Chriſt would deliver us from our enemies, ſo that we might *ſerve him* WITHOUT FEAR, *in holineſs and righteouſneſs before him, all the days of our life*, Rom. 8. 15. Luk. 1. 74, 75.

Now I defy him or any other man to reconcile theſe matters, without carefully diſtinguiſhing between that *bondage* thro' *fear of death* which ſouls are ſubject to before Chriſt *delivers* them; and the *reverence and godly fear*, whereby gracious perſons *ſerve God*. *Heb.* 2. 15 & 12. 28. I come to his diſlike of a third diſtinction, which he delivers thus. " Hence " we may ſee how unfit the common addreſſes at the " end of Sermons to believers, as *diſtinguiſhed* from " careleſs and unconcerned, are to promote the buſi- " neſs of true edification". page 84. Who can refrain from comparing theſe things with what God ſays to falſe prophets? viz. *With lies have ye made the heart of the righteous ſad, whom I have not made ſad; and ſtrengthned the hands of the wicked, that he ſhould not return from his wicked way*, Ezek. 13. 22. Yea he ſays, they do it *by their lies, and by their* LIGHTNESS. Jer. 23. 14, 32. This may turn us

to look at the line of *practice* which this man is labouring to promote; as it is pointed to in various parts of his *Letters*; but is more clearly described in a pamphlet printed last year, called, "A plain and full "account of the christian *practices* observed by the "church in St. *Martin's-le-grand, London*, and "other churches in fellowship with them". In the edition of it at *Boston*, the churches from him are called "SANDEMANIAN". The professed design of it, is *chiefly* to give a *full* account of those *practices* wherein they *differ from others*. page 4. * And the first article of such difference which they name is their having the *Lord's Supper every Sabbath*, for which they cite *Act.* 20 7. And because the disciples met with that design on that day, when *Paul* was there; they would have it, that these churches *brake bread* every first day, p. 6. Another practice they express thus. "In the interval between the morning and afternoon service, we have our *love feasts*; "of which every one partakes; by dining at the "houses of such of the brethren who live sufficiently near,—that the poor may have a comfortable "meal at the expence of the more wealthy.—We "cannot allow any member to be absent from the "feast, either thro' indifference or mere inconvenience", page 4. 8. To prove this they quote three texts, viz. 1 *Cor.* 11. 20, 21. 2 *Pet.* 2 13 *Jude* 12. Wherein we may observe, that *Paul* calls the *Corinthians* feasts, their *own supper*, in distinction from the Lord's Supper; and *Jude* calls them *your feasts*. Thus three Apostles reproved the disorders which attended those feasts; and we have no account that one apostle ever practiced them. Tis most likely that they

* Note, the quotations are from the London edition.

they were taken up in imitation of the old *Jewish feasts*, without any divine warrant at all.

The next particular of their practice is; at their feast, and at the admission of members. and at other opportunities they salute *each other* with a *kiss of charity* page 9 10. And they say, "we account all "objections against it, and all attempts to set it aside, "by substituting any other form of salutation in its "room, to proceed from a disregard to the authority "of the new-testament". However I would ask, is there no difference between *customs* of expressing our respects to each other, and *ordinances* of worship towards God? And is it as criminal to *alter* the *mode* of expressing our love to one another, as to *change* his *ordinances*? The *deists* make a handle of what *Paul* speaks of another custom, against all *revelation*; one of them once said to me, *Paul* was mistaken in some things, for he says, "Doth not *nature it self* "teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a "shame unto him; he mistook *nature* for *custom*". But I think Mr. *Edward*'s remark is a good reply to this; which is "that 'tis *custom* which establishes "any outward sign, as a token of inward sentiment; "therefore when it had established the wearing of "long hair, as the sign of a female, *nature it self* taught "that it was a shame for a man to appear in the known "garb of a woman". So here, those precepts which they refer to, undoubtedly require to salute the saints with *sincere tokens of love*: But I am not convinced that they require us to salute with a kiss, as a token of *spiritual* love, among people who scarce ever knew it used, to manifest any other than *natural* or *carnal* love

Washing of feet, was a needful kindness in old times, to travellers, because their manner of dress

left their feet expoſed to the duſt; but it ſeems this people are conſcious that *cuſtom* has made ſome alteration in theſe things now! for they hold that John 13. 14 makes it our duty to *waſh a brothers feet*, only when it can be an *act of kindneſs to do ſo*, p. 13. And doubtleſs that *example* of our Lord, ought to make us all ready to do the loweſt act of kindneſs to each other: but to *waſh feet* only as a religious ceremony; this we are told has long been annually practiſed by the *Pope*, and by ſeveral Kings of *Europe*.

This people often profeſs their ſtrict regard to ſcripture; yet they declare that they find neither expreſs *precept* nor *precedent* therein, for *family prayer*, while they ſay, "it ſeems neceſſary for maintaining "the fear of God in a family". page 14. But what *fear of God* would they maintain without precept or precedent from him? * However their deſign immediately appears, by their proceeding to judge thoſe who inſiſt upon the practice of *family prayer*, and the *firſt day ſabbath*, but diſregard the *feaſts of charity*, the *holy kiſs*, &c as perſons, "influenced to their "religious practiſes, not by the fear of God, the au-"thority of Chriſt, or the ſpirit of truth" page 15. Thus they judge others: and as to their own members, they ſay, "In every church tranſaction, whether "it be receiving, cenſuring, or expelling members, "chooſing officers, or the like; we eſteem *unanimi-"ty* to be abſolutely neceſſary: Nothing is decided "by the vote of the majority—In ſome caſes indeed "there are diſſenting voices: The reaſons of the de-"ſcent are thereupon propoſed and conſidered; if they

* I believe there is precept, and precedent too in the word for *family prayer*; but as my views on that ſubject were publiſhed laſt year, I ſhall not repeat them here.

" they are ſcriptural, the whole church has cauſe to " change its opinion ; if not, and the perſon perſiſts " in his oppoſition to the *word of God*, the church is " bound to reject him". page 24. 25. What monſtrous things are here !

1 Here is a *ſelf contradiction* ; for the firſt part of the paragraph aſſerts that *nothing* is decided by the *vote of a majority*, while the laſt part declares that the *church rejects* a perſon that *diſſents* ; i. e. the *major* rejects the *minor*.

2 Here is *cruel tyranny*, to oblige every member, to *believe as the church believes* in *every act* upon pain of being *rejected*.

3 Here is an awful *aſſuming of the prerogative of the moſt high* ; for the *churches opinion* which the diſſenting perſon perſiſting in oppoſition to, is without reſerve, called " the word of God". This is the *church* which does not pretend to " have any expreſs " direction for the *preciſe day*, in which *their feaſts* " ſhould be obſerved", page 8 who yet have *choſen* the *Lord's Day* for it, and *cannot allow indifference* or mere *inconvenience* to keep one member therefrom. And they have gone ſo far towards *forbiding to marry*, as poſſitively to deprive a miniſter of his *office*, if he ſhould *marry a ſecond wife*. page 18 yea, this is the church that *makes void* the divine rule concerning *forgiveneſs*, ſo far as abſolutely to refuſe to *receive* a perſon again, if he ſhould incur their *cenſure* after they had reſtored him twice. And yet they call this a *ſolemn check* put upon *all diſobedience* to the *goſpel of Chriſt* : yea, and to *ſtrike* the rejected man's *conſcience to bring him to repentance* ! page 23. O ſtrange ! bring him to *repentance*, but never receive him again !

Yet after all their *ſolemn checks*, they tacitly brand all with the odious name of *Phariſees*, who are againſt encouraging

encouraging all *diverſions publick* or *private* which are not "connected with circumſtances *really ſinful*". page 15, 16. compare this with *Eccleſ.* 7. 2—4. *Phil.* 4. 5. 1 *Theſ.* 5. 8. and many other Scriptures.

Methinks I hear ſome ſay, "We are tired of hearing ſuch things, and why do you ſpend ſo much labour againſt ſo mean a perſon, who is pleaſed with being taken notice of, tho' it be in a way of oppoſition"? I grant theſe remarks to be true; and the *meaneſt* thing I can ſee in him, is the *deceitful* methods which he has taken to promote his deſigns; yet as I was convinced that hereby he has impoſed upon many, I thought it duty to point out ſome of thoſe *deceptions*, and ſo to warn my fellow men of their danger; otherwiſe I ſhould think this labour very unbecoming.

He and his followers make great profeſſions of appearing for *deſpiſed truth.* The *doctrine of the croſs*, and *Paul's Goſpel*; and have accordingly raiſed their ſtandards in the capitals, both of *old* and *new-England*: And inſtead of *Paul's* motto, *in faſtings often*, they have ſet up the baits of *feaſtings often*, and a free encouragement of both publick and private *diverſions*; as if *inclination* did not lead people faſt enough that way, without the ſanction of *religion* to put them forward therein. And inſtead of *keeping under the body*, their ſcheme would keep many from divine worſhip, *every Lord's day*, to provide for *feaſting the body.* And tho' they ſay, "We are utterly againſt aiming to promote the cauſe we contend for either by creeping into private houſes, or by cauſing our voice to be heard in the ſtreets". page 29. yet they do it by that art,

"Whoſe ſofteſt notes out-ſtrip loud thunders ſound,
And ſpread their accents thro' the world's vaſt round"*

And

* Stennet's Ænegma on writing.

And as *creeping*, is the oppoſite of going *upright*; therefor all *who walk not uprightly according to the truth of the goſpel*! let it be to get into private or publick houſes, are juſtly ſaid to *creep in*.

Paul's weapons were uſed for caſting down *imaginations* and every *high thing* that exalteth it ſelf againſt the *knowledge of God*, and bringing into captivity *every thought* to the obedience of Chriſt 2 *Cor.* 10. 5 But this pretender to *Paul*'s goſpel encourageth ſinners to hope that either they were juſtified in infancy, or elſe may be at the cloſe of life; and teacheth them that the deity makes *little account* of our *thoughts* thro' all the *buſy ſcenes* of life: and inſtead of *pulling down ſatan*'s *ſtrong holds*, he has uſed his art to *fortify* them, ſo that now if a preacher makes a cloſe addreſs to their *thought* and *conſcience*, and calls them in Chriſt's name to ſurrender into his hands; to believe on him &c. the *imagination* of a *dead body* is brought up, and the preacher is ridiculed as if he was abſurdly talking to a *ſenſeleſs corpſe*: tho' probably the *ſame image*, was in the ſinners thoughts in the other part of the diſcourſe, to guard againſt any conviction that he was *ſpiritually* dead, becauſe he is *naturally* alive. Yet after this man has exerted all his wits to caſt contempt upon ſuch addreſs, as if the preacher certainly meant that there was ſome good principle in the ſinner's will; he is ſo inconſiſtent, that he labours much to move profeſſors to, what he calls, the ſelf denied works of obedience, without allowing them to think that they are *poſſeſſed* of *any inherent good principle* at all. He ſays, "A perſon by being "brought to the knowledge of the truth, is not there-"by led to think himſelf poſſeſs'd of ſome *good prin-*"*ciple*, by which he ſtands more *nearly related to* "*God* than he was, or than other men. His comfort

ariſes

" does not lie in thinking on any *change* he has un-
" dergone, but he is comforted in thinking on what
" is *without* him, on what is *abſent from* him, even
" on what is *in Heaven.*" So *Balaam* ſaid, *I ſhall ſee him but not now: I ſhall behold him, but not nigh:* whereas *Paul* ſays, *Jeſus Chriſt is* IN *you, except you be reprobates.* Again, this writer ſays, " We muſt
" not conſider the perſon advancing to the aſſurance
" of hope as engaged in certain round of duties, ſo
" as his comfort ſhould ariſe from a *conſciouſneſs* of
" his performing or deſiring to perform them from
" *right motives.*

" Thus the chriſtian profeſſion would become a
" phariſaical ſcheme. We muſt rather conſider
" him, as, at the riſk of all other evils, ſeeking of
" *ſhelter* from the greateſt in the ſociety of Chriſt
" and his diſciples". * What contradiction is here to *Rom.* 8. 15. *Gal.* 4. 6. 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. and great numbers of other places? And what does all Mr. *S*'s religion come to at laſt, more than ſpeculative *notions* about the *truth*, and ſome outward *doings*, without *thinking* he is poſſeſs'd of any *good principle* by which he ſtands *more nearly related to God than other men*; and without being *conſcious* of having experienced any inward *change*, ſo as to act from *right motives*, or *deſiring ſo to do*! Yet when he goes on in *feaſting*, *laughter*, and *diverſions*, he ſtill hopes to have *ſhelter* from the *greateſt of evils, in the ſociety of Chriſt and his diſciples.* Now if we remember *Loretto*, and how he has treated *proteſtant* writers in general, and obſerve that he declares our writers, upon the ſteps of the ſpirits work in conviction and converſion, to be " much more hurtful to mankind, than writers of " *romances*"; and plainly ſignifies that the *pulpit* at preſent

* Epiſtolary correſpond. p 82, 83., & 86.

preſent does *more hurt* than the *ſtage*: And he ſays, "When we hear one deſcribing to us how he firſt "obtained peace with God, if we find him taking "pains to inform us of the influences of grace he "felt in his heart, and the *operations of the Spirit* lead-"ding him on to converſion, we may ſafely ſay, "This is a ſpirit that ſpeaks of it ſelf; this is not "the true grace of God". * And if we reflect again that his plan of church government, diſallows the diſtinction between *circumſtantial*, and *eſſential* points, which is ſo general with proteſtants, and rejects every member that dare be ſo bold as to judge otherwiſe in *any caſe*, than the church does; and yet that this very church reſerves liberty to her ſelf to *correct miſtakes*, and alter her ways as other matters may *occaſſionally* be preſented. page 24.; † These and other things would be apt to make us think of an old ſtory which they uſed to tell, of perſons taking *ſanctuary in the boſom of the church*, whoſe head is called *Chriſt's vicar on earth*.

And tho' this man and his followers appears contemptible to many, and he glories in it, and would not have any think there is any danger of their "ma-"king head as a faction or party of this world"...

* Letters on Theron &c. Vol. 2 page 61. 10... 243. I am far from thinking that our writers on theſe ſubjects are free from errors: The following diſcourſe will ſhew the contrary; yet to treat Mr. *Harvey*, and many other excellent authors as he has done, is monſtrous; tho' his treatment of the work of God's Spirit is much more abominable.

† "Leſt thou ſhouldeſt ponder the path of life, her "ways are *moveable*, that thou canſt not know them". *Prov.* 5 6.
Epiſt. Correſpond. page 15.

yet a due conſideration in the light of truth might give us another view of our ſtate. For tho' few have received his model of church affairs; yet many are pleaſed with his crafty cants upon our moſt awakening preachers and writers; and inſtead of *mortifying the deeds of the body*, they are ſtrongly attached to the *pleaſures of ſenſe*. And if we realize how much profeſſors of religion value themſelves, upon their nice diſtinctions and refined *ſpeculations*, with ſome polite *forms*; while they give ſad proofs of unacquaintedneſs with *heart exerciſe*, and a *living conformity to God*: and obſerve how *many inventions* they are *ſeeking out* to eaſe their minds, in neglect, if not contempt, of this *good old way*; theſe, and many other things might juſtly alarm us all. For let men pleaſe themſelves never ſo much with their refined ſentiments, and a *bare belief* of the *truth*; yet he who cannot lie, ſays, "Becauſe they received not the *love of the truth*, "that they might be ſaved, God ſhall ſend them "*ſtrong deluſions*, that they may believe a lie; that "they all might *be damned*, who believed not the "truth, but had *pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs*". 2 *Theſ.* 2. 10—12. What did the *counſel of Balaam* do, after he had ſpoken many bright truths? *Feaſting* under the name of religion, and carnal embrace, involved *Iſrael* in ſuch iniquity, as *Phinehas* and other princes ſaid, they were not *cleanſed from*, even when ſettled in *Canaan*, altho' there was a plague which ſwept off twenty four thouſand of them, *Num.* 25. 9. and 31. 16. *Joſhua.* 22. 17. See alſo *Rev.* 2. 14.

The apoſtle *Paul* not only ſays, It is *high time to awake out of ſleep*, but he alſo warns us againſt *this*, and other ſnares which tend to lull us to ſleep again; for we are told that the word *Comus*, which is tranſlated *rioting*, in *Rom.* 13. 13. is with the heathen the *God*

of

of feasts: * And surely that God who must have *feasting* and *kissing*, upon every day that is set a part for his worship, is more properly called *Comus* than *Christ*, or † *Lord Peor* than *Lord Jesus*. I doubt not but many are now drawn into these ways in their *simplicity*, as those were who followed *Absalom*, when he pretended he was going to *pay his vow unto the Lord*. 2 *Sam.* 15. 7, 11. Who then can hold his peace under such apprehensions? No man's station is so low but if he discovered a lurking *enemy*, or kindling *fire* ready to spread slaughter and desolation all around, ought to alarm others of their danger: He, who would excuse him from guilt, if he neglected so to do? And tho' false alarms ought not to be made, yet a *mistake* in that would be more easily excused, than a neglect to give notice of real danger. Therefore none may justly blame so weak an attempt as this is, if I have truly pointed out any snares and dangers which at present attend us, that my brethren and fellow mortals were not sufficiently a ware of before; for when the apostle *Jude* found it needful to write unto us, and *exhort* us to *contend earnestly for the faith*; the reason he gives therefor is, that there are *certain men crept in unawares*, who under a pretence of *grace*, with *great swelling words*, use all their art to cover and gratify the *fire* of *lusts*, which exposeth to the just *vengeance of eternal fire*: And he plainly directs to one method of help, that is now craftily guarded against, namely close and moving addresses to men's souls, for their deliverance from ruin. After exhorting saints to a close walk with God, he says, "And "of some have *compassion*, making a difference: and

* Vide Dr. *Gill* on the place, and Mr. *Edwards*'s life and remains published 1765.

† *Baal* signifies *Lord*.

" others ſave with fear, *pulling them out of the fire*; " having even the garment *ſpotted by the fleſh*". He had already ſpoken of *dreamers*. and here he has a plain alluſion to perſons in a *deep ſleep*, when, tho' they may have fine *dreams* and *notions* in their *heads*, yet the *flames* are juſt ready to conſume them. Who can obſerve this emblem and not renounce and deteſt that cold, and general way of ſpeaking upon the great concerns of eternity, that is ſo much in vogue at this day! John was a *burning* as well as a *ſhining light*.

Some ſenſe of the importance of theſe things has carried me beyond my firſt deſign; but now I leave the foregoing and following remarks both upon our miſery and the goſpel remedy, to the readers judgment, deſiring each one to be as *noble* as the *Bereans* were, and *ſearch the ſcriptures daily, whether theſe things are ſo*. If any thing is found to diſagree therewith, let it be rejected in welcome: but if any *ſcorn* to regard the truth, *he alone muſt bear it*. On the other hand, if any ſhall receive the leaſt benefit hereby, 'tis hoped they will neither neglect to give all the glory to God, nor to pray for their unworthy ſervant in the goſpel.

ISAAC BACKUS.

Middleborough,
May 4th 1767.

Faith wrought with his Works.

JAMES II. 22.

Seeſt thou how Faith wrought with his Works, and by works was Faith made perfect.

SOME have thought that there was a difference in ſentiment between *Paul* and *James*, becauſe one inſiſts ſo much upon juſtification by faith without works; and the other aſſerts that by works a man is juſtified, and not by faith only. But if the ſcope and occaſion of their writings be duly attended to, this ſeeming contradiction will vaniſh. *Paul* laboured chiefly upon laying the foundation of chriſtianity, where Chriſt had not been named; and ſcarce any thing is more natural than for ſouls when awakned to think, that as by breaking the law they expoſed themſelves to divine wrath; ſo that the way to appeaſe that wrath, and obtain God's favour is to keep the law: therefore he engageth with all his might againſt all ſuch notions, and fully proves that nothing but Chriſt's righteouſneſs can juſtify us before God: while *James* wrote principally to profeſſors, to ſtir them up, and exhort them to live agreable to their profeſſion,

ſeſſion, in the ſeveral places where they were *ſcattered abroad*; and to expoſe the abſurdity of pretending to have faith when it did not produce obedience. He puts the queſtion, *What doth it profit my brethren, tho' a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? can faith ſave him?* That is, can that be ſaving faith which does not bring forth good fruit; and what profit is there in a man's ſaying he has it, when we have only his bare word to prove it? And he proceeds to make this demand, —*Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will ſhew thee my faith by my works*: From whence it appears that the juſtification which he is there upon, is what is *evidential*, a *ſhewing* and evidencing to others that we have juſtifying faith. And to illuſtrate the matter he brings in the example of the father of the faithful, ſaying, 'was not '*Abraham* our father juſtified by works, when he had 'offered *Iſaac* his ſon upon the altar? *Abraham* belie-'vedGod and it was accounted to him for righteouſneſs", long before that time; but now the evidence thereof, and of his true regard to God's authority, ſhined forth with peculiar luſture, which I take to be the import of theſe expreſſions, *Now I know that thou feareſt God. Gen.* 22. 12. With great propriety therefore, is this example introduced to detect a *dead faith*, and to ſhew the difference between that and a *living one.*

The apoſtle would have us obſerve it well: *Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works*? how powerfully it governed his heart and conduct, in ſuch a trying affair. Yet let us remember, he does not ſay, " ſee how his works produced his faith": No, he ſets faith as the leading grace, and tells us in the next verſe, that *the ſcripture was fulfilled which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteouſneſs. James* held to juſtification

cation by *imputed righteouſneſs*, as much as *Paul*; and on the other hand, *Paul* held to faith which worketh by love, and makes ſouls careful to maintain good works * as much as *James*; they were ſweetly agreed.

What I ſhall further attempt from this text, as divine aſſiſtance may be granted, is,

I. To open the nature of Faith.

II. Shew its powerful influence on the heart and life.

III. How by works it is made perfect.

I. I ſhall endeavour to open the nature of this faith upon which there have been great controverſies in our day. And I ſhall endeavour to keep cloſe to the ſcripture account of it, which ſhews plainly,

1. That Chriſt is the *author* as well as *finiſher* of our faith: and that it is wrought in the ſoul by the *exceeding greatneſs* of God's power. *Heb.* 12. 2. *Eph.* 1. 19.

2. That the *word* is the means of it; *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom.* 10 17.

3. That the heart of man is the ſubject of this grace: *With the heart man believeth, Rom.* 10 10. yea with *all the heart, Acts* 8. 37. Thus the author, means and ſeat of this principle, are plainly pointed out: but ſtill it is inquired what is the nature of faith? To this the anſwer is ready;

4. *It is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not ſeen.* Heb. 11. 1. *The things hoped for* are all the bleſſings which are promiſed in the goſpel; grace and glory, and every good thing that God's people need. Faith takes his word for all, and by it they appear *ſubſtantial realities* to the ſoul. *The things not ſeen*, comprehend all the affairs of the inviſible and eternal world, which are revealed in the word; ſuch as the being and perfection of God; his creating all things out of nothing, and upholding all

* *Gal.* 5. 6. *Tit* 3. 8.

things by the word of his power; his creating man in his own image, and giving to him a law as the rule, and condition of his life; man's breaking that law, whereby death and misery are brought upon the world! the doctrine of the trinity; the son of God's undertaking for us, and his taking upon him our nature, wherein he obeyed and suffered in our stead, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; the holy Ghost's coming to apply these great blessings; the resurrection, general judgment, and the future state of happiness to the righteous, and misery to the wicked. These and all other matters of divine revelation, faith is the *evidence* of.

Evidence is to discover what is otherwise unknown, and to decide controversies. Now the *world by wisdom knew not God*; and they are full of controversies about divine things. But faith takes the divine evidence as that which is sufficient to end all disputes. The believer settles the matter there, if God has said it, that is enough; *for if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater.* Human testimony about distant things, tho' it should come from persons of good credit, yet the things are distant and invisible to us, and we know men may be mistaken: but the Lord presents the great things which concern our peace in *present* view, to the believing soul. His word is compared to *glass*, which opens as it were a window into the eternal world, so that when the spirit takes the *veil from our hearts*, *we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3. 16—18.

These plain scriptures may teach us the evil of that opinion 'that in the first act of faith we believe, that which was not true before'. The objects were the same before, tho' we did not see them 'till then. And

there

there is as little truth in asserting on the other hand, "that we have no knowledge of our interest in those "blessings, *in* faith, but only by its *effects* afterwards". Indeed the glory of divine objects engages our first attention; yet as the first *entrance of the word giveth light*, * it gives the soul at the same instant, some knowledge and enjoyment of the benefits of the glorious *Sun*! † and which is greatly consumed by after effects. "The conveyance of the truth to them "for their relief, as much prevents every motion of "their will, as did the divine gracious purpose before the world was". For the guilt of unbelief lies in this, that *light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light*: And *their eyes have they closed, least they should see and be converted, and healed.* They are *willingly ignorant* of the evidence of the truth of God's word, which shines in all his works. § Now how can any soul possibly be turned herefrom, to *behold the lamb of God which taketh away the Sin of the world*, ‖ without any motion of his will? Another mistake may likewise be detected here. Some hold that the faith which unbelievers are condemn'd for the neglect of, is a lower kind of faith, than that which is saving. But what is saving faith beside this, viz. a *receiving* with *all the heart* the *witness* and *testimony* that *God hath given us*, of *eternal life in his Son*? 1 Joh. 5. 9—12. And he that *believeth not God, hath made him a liar.* The evidence of this truth shines so clearly as to leave all without excuse, who do not believe with *all their hearts*; while every soul that is made willing by divine power, to *receive his testimony, and set to his seal that God is true*, knows that this *faith is not of himself*; it is the

* *Psal.* 119. 130. † *Psal.* 84. 11. *Mal.* 4. 2.

§ *Joh.* 3. 19. *Acts* 28. 27. 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. ‖ *John* 1. 29.

gift of God; * who is worthy to be obeyed as well as trusted for ever. Which leads us,

II. To consider the powerful influence of faith on the heart and life. *Seest thou how faith wrought with his works?* how it moved him to ready obedience. When the command came, "Take now thy son, thine "only son *Isaac*, whom thou lovest, and get thee "into the land of *Moriah*; and offer him there for "a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which "I shall tell thee of"! † *Abraham* knew it to be God's call, and that was enough for him; he never stands to confer with flesh and blood, nor to say, "I "am in a justified state, and thererore I shall be sa-"ved if I do not comply with so surprizing and trying "a command". No, tho' there never was a command which nature might form more plausible pleas against than this; yet he makes no delay, but riseth early in the morning, prepares for the journey and goes three days travel to the appointed place, for the heart rending work; and there, with unshaken resolution he proceeds in his obedience, until a voice from heaven gave him a release from sacrificing his son, and said, *Now I know that thou feareſt God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me*, Gen. 22. 1—12.

Come precious souls, attend here and learn what that *fear of God is*, which is so often enjoined and recommended in scripture: it is not that *dread* that moves many to work like *slaves* for fear of punishment; but it is a *noble regard* to God which flows from acquaintance with him, and faith in him, whereby the saint views him as worthy to be obeyed with all our powers, and that nothing is too dear to be given up at his command. Such is the nature and influence of

* *John* 3. 33. *Eph.* 2. 8. † *Gen.* 22.

of true faith. There are three things in faith which powerfully excite to obedience, and guard against all the snares of sin: The believing soul views the *precept* to be true and excellent, therefore to be obeyed; the *promise* to be sure and sufficient, therefore he shall be *supported*; and faith presents eternal things as *near* and *real*, therefore to be *regarded* without delay. And if we carefully observe, we shall find that in these are the main springs of obedience, and that the contrary is the root of all mischief.

1 The soul by faith views and esteems all God's precepts concerning all things to be *sure*, *right*, and *excellent*, therefore ever to be *obeyed*. *Psal.* 93 5 and 119. 128. The contrary of this was the main snare that drew our first parents into disobedience. God had given them a law, and declared that in the day they broke it, they should *surely die*: but the serpent represented that command unreasonable, and said *ye shall not surely die* if ye brake it; and to him they hearkned, and rebelled against God. And tho' many of their children deny their being sinners by nature; yet they might be justly challenged to produce one of them all, who does not naturally conceit, that the plain letter of God's law is hard and severe, and that if they break it, yet the full penalty will not take place upon them. Nay what less than this, is implied in all their objections against the doctrines of absolute and certain salvation in Jesus alone? Representing as tho' these doctrines would hinder obedience. All such objections carry such language as this in them, namely, that men do not view the divine law to be true and excellent, nor the lawgiver to be worthy of all honor and regard; no, but since he has got the power in his hands, we must make the best terms with him we can, lest he fall upon us and destroy us;

tho' if we were once certain that we were ſecure therefrom, we would take our eaſe, and live as we liſt. O aſtoniſhing! Is this the dignity of human nature, that we hear ſo much of! We all know that what, we love, and have a great eſteem of, we purſue after and delight in, without being drove to it by terrors, or puniſhments: yea, we will purſue after it tho' terrors and dangers ſhould appear againſt us, and ſtill hope to eſcape the danger, and to enjoy the object of our deſires: Thus the covetous perſon purſues after, his beloved gains, the ambitious man after his honors, and the luxurious man after his pleaſure; and notwithſtanding the curſes of the law are levelled directly againſt him, he ſecretly hopes to eſcape the laſh of them, which hope is ſuppor ed by unbelief. So *Moſes* deſcribes the *root that beareth gall and wormwood*, as being one who heareth the words of the curſe, yet bleſſeth himſelf in his heart ſaying, *I ſhall have peace, tho' I walk in the imagination of mine heart.* Deut. 29. 19.

Every ſoul which runs on in ſin, is ſome way or other blinded about the truth and verity of God's law; but the believer views his teſtimonies to be *very ſure*, and that *holineſs becomes his houſe for ever*, which engageth him to walk in all the commandments, and ordinances of the Lord blameleſs; and he is abundantly ſtrengthned therein.

2 By viewing the *promiſe* to be *ſure* and *ſufficient*, and therefore he ſhall be ſupported in all the work that God calls him to. This is one peculiar glory of the goſpel plan, that a full ſupply of help is provided and promiſed to enable the ſaint to go thro' every duty, that the precept enjoins upon him. Is he called to go thro' rough ways, then his *ſhoes ſhall be iron and braſs*, and as his *day is* his *ſtrength ſhall be.* Is

he

he assaulted with temptation? The Lord says, *my grace is sufficient for thee*; yea, he says to all his children, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee*: so that they boldly say, *the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.* Heb 13. 5, 6. A believing view of these and other *exceeding great and precious promises*, gives the saint a participation of such divine supplies as enables him to be *stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as he knows that his labour is not in vain in the Lord.* 2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Cor. 15. 58. While thousands and ten thousands, who have had some sight of the danger of a sinful course, so as to bring them to resolve to lead a new life; yet have fainted in the way, and by reason of difficulties without, and struggles within, have given up the cause and turned again to their old ways, if not into worse conduct than before. Alas! what multitudes of old, *despised the pleasant land*, which God had promised to *Israel*, because *they believed not his word*: * and tho' they could not deny but it was a good land; yet they imagined that strength of the enemies and the heighth of their walls, were a sufficient bar against their proceeding any further, and a good reason for their turning back into the wilderness; whereby God's awful judgment their carcases fell. And we have abundant evidence that the record of their fall, stands as a loud and constant warning to us all, to give the more *earnest heed* to the things which we have heard in the gospel, least *any man fall after the same example of unbelief* †

Natural men pursue a separate interest of their own in all they do; therefore they must support themselves and their cause: but all that are reconciled to God, become

* *Psal.* 106. 24. † *Psal.* 95. & *Heb.* 2, 3. & 4 chapt.

become one with him, in intereſt and end; hence they do not go a warfare, againſt the world, fleſh and devil, at their own charges; but have truth it ſelf engaged to *ſupply all* their *needs*, which ſtrengthens them to *come boldly to the throne of grace*, that they may *obtain help in time of need*. * This diſtinction is very conſpicuous in the ſpies which *Moſes* ſent to view the promiſed land; altho' the true, and the falſe ſpies both had a ſight of the ſame walls and enemies, yet how different is their language? The one ſays, *We are well able to overcome* them; but the other ſaid, *We be not able*: And the cauſe of this difference in judgment is quite plain; The falſe ſpies formed their concluſion by computing what proportion there was between their own ſtrength, and that of the enemy; while the true ones viewed the infinite diſproportion there was between Jehovah, by whoſe direction they acted, and on whoſe promiſe they truſted, and all thoſe tall worms which others were ſo much frightned at; and this view made them plead with *Iſrael* not to rebel againſt the Lord, neither fear the people of the land, *for*, ſay they, *they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not.* Num. 13. 30, 31. & 14. 9. But the congregation refuſed to hear, and believe this noble teſtimony, and O, how dreadful were the conſequences!

" Look back, my ſoul, with holy dread,
" And view thoſe antient rebels dead;
" Attend the offer'd grace to day,
" Nor looſe the bleſſings by delay.
" Seize the kind promiſe while it waits,
" And march to *Zion*'s heavenly gates;
" Believe, and take the promis'd reſt;
" Obey, and be for ever bleſt". †

The

* *Phil.* 4. 19. *Heb.* 4. 16. † *Watts in the* 95*th Pſalm*

The truth we are upon ſhines with peculiar luſtre in the example of another antient patriarch. *Jacob* upon his return from *Padan Aram* with his family, heard that his angry brother was coming to meet him, with four hundred men, which filled him with great concern; and what can he do with his feeble company? why, he makes his addreſs to his heavenly friend, (as well as improves the beſt means within his power for relief) and ſays, *O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Iſaac, the Lord which ſaid unto me, return unto thy country, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies, and truth, which thou haſt ſhewed unto thy ſervant.—Deliver me, I pray thee,—thou ſaid'ſt I will ſurely do thee good.* Gen. 32. 9—12. O my friends, here is an example for us all! and may we duly regard it. Here precept and promiſe are ſweetly united, which ſatan is ever trying to ſeparate as he did in his temptation to our Saviour, when he brought the promiſe of being borne up by angels: but left out the clauſe, *in all thy ways*, which reſpects the ways that God has directed us to walk in. Thus he often tempts ſouls to preſume upon being upheld by divine promiſe, tho' in a way of diſregard of divine rule. But *Jacob* could appeal to what God had *ſaid*, for the *warrant* of his *conduct*, as well as for the *ſupport* of his *cauſe*; yet he is far from pleading any deſerving of his own; he ſees that he is not *worthy* of the *leaſt mercy*; at the ſame time he believes that God *is true*, and there he fixeth his claim. *Thou ſaid'ſt I will ſurely do thee good*; and with humble boldneſs, he would hold him to his word, and ſay, *I will not let thee go, except thou bleſs me.* And the bleſſing he had with a witneſs; and a new name, which ſignifies that, *as a prince he prevail'd with God.*

Come

Come all you who ſay, that the belief of mercies being ſure to us, will make us careleſs in our conduct: dare you ſtill confront heaven? For ſo long as this and other ſuch like ſacred records remain true, all ſuch objectors will be found liars, and their ſpeech nothing worth. At the ſame time, this inſtance ſhews what a dead, vain thing, that pretended faith is, which does not influence men's hearts, and govern their behavior. Seeſt thou how *Jacob*'s faith moved his ſoul to plead and *wreſtle all night* for promiſed bleſſings; and likewiſe diligently to uſe the beſt means he could, in order to obtain the deliverance he wanted? Theſe are the *footſteps of the flock*, which we muſt *go forth by*, if we would find reſt to our ſouls. A further confirmation of our doctrine is,

3. That faith views eternal things as *near* and *real*; therefore to be *regarded without delay*. What multitudes are there, where the goſpel ſhines, who do not pretend to deny the importance of religion, that ſtill *neglect the great ſalvation*? The chief cauſe of which, is that the objects of ſenſe, and things of time, appear to them as *preſent realities*; while that ſalvation is to them a *diſtant uncertainty*: And therefore to part with preſent honors, riches or pleaſures, for things which they know not, they will not do, as long as they can help it. Thus they are willingly blinded by the *God of this world*, leaſt the *light of the goſpel ſhould ſhine unto them*: but when God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, ſhines into the heart, * then all things appear juſt the reverſe; the glories of this world are ſeen to be *uncertain, vexatious vanities*, and ſpiritual things to be *preſent*, and *glorious realities*. By faith *Moſes refuſed* all the glittering charms of *Pharaoh*'s court, and choſe to

* 2 Cor. 4. 4, 6.

to take his lot with God's *afflicted* people; for he saw the *pleasures of sin* were but *for a* short *season*; yea he *esteemed reproach* for Christ to be *greater riches than the treasures in* Egypt; *for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.** Faith presents the great white throne in view, and gives the soul (as it were,) to hear the awful and glorious sentence from the judge's mouth, which shall *reward* every man according to his works: and this moves the saint to act now, as every one will wish they had acted when these heavens shall be no more: yea, and he finds that in keeping God's commands there is *great reward.*

And as faith guards against the *allurements*, so it does also against the *terrors* of the world and the devil. *By faith Moses forsook Egypt*; led forth *Israel* from their cruel master, *not fearing* his *wrath*, tho' one of the greatest of earthly *Kings*, *for he endured as seeing him who is invisible.* God reproves his people smartly by the prophet, that they should be *afraid of a man that shall die*, and *forget the Lord their maker.* Isai. 52. 12, 13. A believing view of him, was such a shield to *Daniel*'s three friends, against the rage of another monarch, who had spread terror thro' the world, that they could boldly tell him to his face, that they were *not careful to answer* him in a matter in which he commanded, what their God forbad: and that they *would not obey him* therein; no, notwithstanding a *fiery furnace* was set before them, as the penalty of such disobedience, *Dan.* 3. 16. v. 18. These truths are so weighty, and so delightful, that I scarce know how to leave them; tho' it may be time that I come,

III. To consider how *by works, faith is made perfect*; and I understand two things by it,

* *Heb.* 11. 24—27.

1. That hereby the perfect, or excellent nature of faith is *made manifeſt* : So the word *made* is ſometimes uſed ; as by *Peter* on the day of penticoſt : *Let all the houſe of* Iſrael *know aſſuredly, that God hath* made *that ſame Jeſus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Chriſt*, Acts 2. 36. That is he hath *made* it *manifeſt*, or (as another text has it) *declared him to be the ſon of God with power*. So here, by works faith is made perfect, as its excellent nature is manifeſted thereby.

2. By exerciſe it *grows* ; it is compared to a grain of muſtard ſeed which grows to a great tree : So the juſt who live by faith, walk in the path which *is as the ſhining light, that ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18. Both of theſe, were eminently true in *Abraham* : the perfect nature of his faith was made manifeſt, ſo that heaven bore teſtimony thereto ; and alſo this trying exerciſe, greatly encreas'd it. Many weighty leſſons might be drawn from theſe obſervations : I would touch upon a few.

1. Hence ſee how unreaſonable and falſe, all the objections are, againſt the doctrines of free grace, and being ſaved by faith, which would repreſent them as injurious to the intereſt of morality ; when it is clearly proved, that faith in Chriſt for righteouſneſs and ſtrength, is the very principle from whence all good works flow ; yea, and truth it ſelf ſhews, that without it we can no more bear good fruit, than the branch can be fruitful without union, and communion with the vine, *John.* 15. 1—5.

Yet (amazing to think of!) the ſcripture is not fuller of proofs for theſe doctrines, than the world is of oppoſition againſt them ; but if we examine carefully, we ſhall find, that what is ſaid againſt the doctrines of grace, proceeds chiefly from the ſame quarter,

that

that the falſe prophets *dreams* did of old, namely, the *deceit of their own hearts.* We may often hear men, telling how they would gratify their luſts if they believed them doctrines were true; and alſo that if their good works, did nothing towards intitling them to divine favour, they would never do any more. Such language, has often reminded me of *Solomon*'s remarks, that *when he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wiſdom faileth him, and he ſaith to every one that he is a fool*; for what greater folly can a man expreſs, than this? Such language holds forth plainly, that all their delight is in ſin, and therefore if they were once delivered from fear of the conſequence, they would indulge their luſts without controul, with all their might: and that as to their pretended good works, *ſelf* is the ſpring and end of them all; ſo that if *ſelf* was but ſecure they would not care what became of God's honor, or others welfare; and on the other hand, if *ſelf* might not lay in ſome claim for the ſervices they do for God, they would quit the tedious buſineſs.

This folly is dreſt up in our day, with all the fine language, that many of the wiſe men of this world are maſters of; who, with great pretences of *reaſon*, "make as bold with the bible, (as to the goſpel part "thereof) as one of the ſenate houſes ſometimes do "with a bill ſent them from the other, i. e. find "faults, and make amendments, only to clog the ſame "and render it obſcure and intricate, that ſo it may "ſink at laſt" * But before men venture ſo far to *ſpeak evil of thoſe things, which they know not*, they had better come down to things that they do know: and if they would give ſuch a deſcription of their ſentiments about what is good œconomy in their own families,

* Mr. S. Keeps divine energy. dedication page 5.

as they do about Christ's family, there would be no great danger of their *subverting whole houses*, as they often do. Let one of these doctors come out, and tell the world, that "He has got a very affectionate "and faithful wife, and the way she is kept so, is by "a constant fear of being divorced and punished, if "she should embrace a false lover; and that he has "no other way to keep her in good order, but only "by holding her in *suspence* about his unshaken love "to her": Or that "he has got an excellent and "obedient son, and the way he is kept so, is by fre-"quently threatning to disinherit him, if he does not "behave well; and that he is forced to hold his "son always in *doubt*, about ever enjoying his fa-"ther's estate; in order to keep him in good sub-"jection to his commands". Now when they can convince us, that this is the best sort of œconomy in a human family, then possibly we may believe, that assurance has a hurtful tendency; and that it is not best, for Christ to grant the request of his spouse, when she cries, *Set me as a seal upon thine heart:— for love is strong as death, jealousy is as cruel as the grave.* * Tho' as long as we believe that God knew best what has a good tendency, who says, of our spiritual David, *If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.* And that he is willing more abundantly to shew unto the *heirs of promise the immutibility of his counsel*, that they might have *strong consolation:* † so long we must detest and abhor all such teachings as would represent, that the knowledge of God's unchanging love in Christ Jesus, is of a dangerous tendency.

Let

* *Cant.* 8. 6. *Psal.* 89. 30—33. † *Heb.* 6. 17, 18.

Let us attend to the teſtimony of one, who was with our Lord on the mount, concerning this matter. "Beloved, (ſays he) now are we the ſons of "God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall "be: but we KNOW, that when he ſhall appear, we "ſhall be like him; for we ſhall ſee him as he is. "And *every man* that hath *this hope* in him, purifieth "himſelf, even as he is pure". * This teſtimony is diematrically oppoſite to the modern notions of many, in two points: *one* is, that many will ſay, "if "you are *aſſured*, you are got beyond *hope*": but *John* calls a *knowing* that we ſhall have the beatific viſion, *this hope*: and tho' he does not aſſert that all ſaints have this Knowledge; yet near the cloſe of this experimental epiſtle, he does ſay, "Theſe things "have I written unto you that believe on the name of "the ſon of God; that ye *may know* that ye have "eternal life". † Which is as plain as words can expreſs, that all true believers *may know*, that they have eternal life. The *other* point is, the effect of this knowledge. How often have we heard it declared, that if a perſon "knows he ſhall go to heaven, this "will make him careleſs about his conduct". And yet *John* aſſerts, that *every man* that hath *this hope* in him, *purifieth himſelf*: and aims at nothing leſs than to be pure *even as Chriſt is pure*. And now who ſhall we credit? him that wrote by inſpiration of God, or they that ſpeak and write according to the wiſdom of this world? Surely we muſt give in to the apoſtles concluſion, *Let God be true, and every man a liar*.

Therefore, 2. Hence learn the reaſon why all ſin is ſummed up in unbelief, both by Chriſt and his apoſtles, *John* 16 9. *Rom.* 3. 9 & 11. 32. *Gal.* 3. 22. The more we look into things truely, the more clearly

* 1. *John* 3. 2, 3. † *Joh.* 5. 13.

clearly we ſhall find it to be ſo. Truth abundantly declares that God is the fountain of all good and happineſs. Now, was this believed, by precious ſouls, could they purſue a courſe contrary to him, in order to obtain happineſs? Our Savior ſhews, that one ſoul is worth more than this world, and that if a man ſhould gain the *whole world*, and looſe his *own ſoul*, he would have a dreadful bargain of it. —If this was credited as a *reality*, could men poſſibly neglect their ſouls for earthly trifles, as moſt of them do? *Solomon* ſays, *The getting of treaſures by a lying tongue, is a vanity toſſed to and fro of them that ſeek death.* * Were this viewed as truth, by any that take falſe and deceitful ways to get wealth, it would be like the drawn ſword † to one of old, who *loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs*, he fell before it. I have ſome where ſeen this remark, that of all tranſgreſſors, the drunkard may ſeem to have the moſt reaſon to ſay, he cannot help gratifying his luſt: yet preſent him with the fineſt bowle of liquor, and then let him know, that there is a doſe of poiſon in the bottom of it, he will not take it. Now truth it ſelf warns him not to look § upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup; becauſe, *at the laſt it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder.*

So as to uncleanneſs, where is the mariner, let him be ever ſo weary, that would lie down upon the yielding wave, or think to take his reſt upon the *top of a maſt*? yet the oracles of God give this as a juſt emblem of him that yields to the harlots embrace. ‖ Yea and alſo likens him to the *ox* that goes to the *ſlaughter*, and a *bird* that *haſteth to the ſnare, and knoweth not it is for his life.* And if we (*like Ezekiel*) turn

* *Prov.* 21. 6. † *Num.* 22. 31. § *Prov.* 23. 31. 32.
‖ *Prov.* 23. 34 & 7. 22. 23.

turn yet again, we ſhall ſee greater abominations than theſe, in the *falſe ſwearer*. He is afraid of loſing ſomething of earth; or, of meeting with ſhame and puniſhment from men, and what will he do? why he will deny the truth and appeal to heaven to confirm that, which God and his own conſcience know is falſe; which reminds me of a paſſage in ſir *Francis Bacon*, to this effect, that "The liar acts the part of "a *bravado* towards God, but of a *coward* toward "men; for he *faces* God, but *ſhrinks* from men". Be ye aſtoniſhed O ye heavens at this!

This again brings to mind a maxim, which people often uſe viz "Of too evils chuſe the leaſt". Now there is the evil of *ſin*, and the evil of *affliction*: one is againſt God, the other affects our ſelves; and *ſelf* generally carries the day, ſo that *Elihu*'s words are more juſtly applicable, even to moſt profeſſors in our day, than they were to *Job* and his friends:—*Take heed, regard not iniquity: for this haſt thou choſen rather than affliction*, Job. 36. 21. Whereas thoſe that live by faith, now as well as formerly, chuſe to endure the *trial of cruel mockings, and ſcourgings, bonds and impriſonments; yea to be ſtoned, ſawn aſunder, or ſlain with the ſword:* or *to wander about in ſheep ſkins, and goat ſkins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented*, rather than *accept deliverance* upon any ſinful terms. *Heb.* 11. 35. 37. And did the ambitious man believe, that all men's hearts are in the hand of the Lord, and that he ſpeaks the truth when he ſays, *Them that honor me, I will honor; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed*; * would he take the contrary way to obtain honor?

And what ſhall we ſay of hypocrites? They *draw near* to God *with their mouth, and honor him with their*

* 1 *Sam.* 2. 30.

their lips; but have removed their heart far from him. * They are very ſtrict in ſome outward forms of worſhip, and generally add ſome *precepts of men* to divine inſtitution. They *come and ſit,* ſometimes *before* a good miniſter, and if he is eloquent, his preaching is to *them as a very lovely ſong,* and they will praiſe the ſpeaker and his *words, but they do them not: for with their mouth they ſhew much love, but their heart goeth after their coveteouſneſs:* † ſo that they will *turn aſide the juſt for a thing of naught; devour widow's houſes,* and *are full of extortion and exceſs;* § yet will *make long prayers,* and have many religious *pretences,* and cry, *Is not the Lord among us? none evil can come upon us.* ‖ They do not *know* that Chriſt IS IN them, *the hope of glory* ¶ but might *know* the contrary; yet upon a *negative* propoſition, they form a *poſitive* concluſion.

Obſerve it well, they do not by faith truſt *in* Chriſt; *yet will they lean upon him, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us?* The world's religion is built upon *negatives*; but when the Lord's ſervants openly point out to them their abominations, and warn them of the dreadful conſequences thereof, they will *watch for iniquity; make a man an offender for a word, and lay a ſnare for him that reproveth in the gate!* † and tho' the *heads* of Zion *judge for reward, the prieſts teach for hire, and the prophets divine for money;* § yet becauſe the Lord's name and worſhip is *among* them, they will not hear to any ſuch thing, but for all they are ſo much againſt *certainty* in religion; they now *poſitively* contradict the warning, and ſay, *none evil can come upon us.* Ah! were they once convinced of

* *Iſai.* 29. 13. *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. † *Ezek.* 30. 31, 22.
§ *Iſai.* 29. 21. ‖ *Mat.* 23. 14 25. ¶ *Mich.* 3. 11.
§ *Col.* 1. 27. † *Iſai.* 29. 20. 21. ‖ *Micah* 3. 11.

of the *truth*; *ſinners in Zion* would be ſoon *afraid*, *fearfulneſs ſhall ſurprize the hypocrite*. *

Time would fail, to ſpeak of the evidence that appears from every quarter, of unbelief's being the root of all evil. The *wages* of all *ſin is death*, † which comprehends the ruin both of ſoul and body, for time and eternity. *This* is what every ſinner is at *work for*, as much as one that is hired is at work for his wages: it is what he *earns*, and juſtice will give him his *due*. Come up then, you that ſay, "If our good "works do nothing towards procuring God's favour, they "will do no more;" Did you believe that the *wages* of your *bad* works is death, and that you earn hell by every ſin you commit; could you run on to abuſe the *goodneſs of God*, and *treaſure up wrath* unto your ſelves as you do? *Rom.* 2. 4, 5.

Methinks I hear ſome ſay, "We are far from de-"nying theſe plain *truths*, and *rules*; but there are "certain *doctrines* taught by ſome, which do a world "of miſchief. Ay, what are they? why one is, "That all mankind are fallen undone ſinners, and "cannot help themſelves in the leaſt; hence 'tis in "many mouth's *I cant help my ſelf*, and ſo they go "on in ſin".

Anſwer, I know I have heard it from many mouths, who yet, when death and eternity have been made to appear *realities* before them, have talked quite other language: for then they would cry, "O if God will "ſpare my life, I will never live as I have done!" Which demonſtrates that they do not *really ſee*, that they can do nothing, but only would ward off conviction by that pretence. Do you think the woman with an iſſue of blood, who had *ſuffered many things of many phyſicians, and had ſpent all that ſhe had*,

* Iſai. 33. 14. † Rom. 6. 23.

and was nothing better, but rather grew worse; was hindered by a ſenſe of her *helpleſs* caſe, from coming to Jeſus for a free cure? * Our Lord gives the reaſon of his being diſregarded, yea rejected by the *Jews* thus, *They that are whole need not the phyſician, but they that are ſick.* † Had they believed the prophets teſtimony, ‖ That their *whole head was ſick, and their whole heart faint*; that there was *no ſoundneſs in them*, they would not have rejected our glorious phyſician as they did. Indeed the contrary opinion, was the very cauſe thereof; they thought that the *Meſſiah* would teach them ſome further *good things, that they might do to inherit eternal life*: ¶ but when he proclaimed liberty to them from captivity and bondage, this gave great offence, aud they ſaid *we be* Abraham's *ſeed*, and were never *in bondage*; *how ſayeſt thou, we ſhall be made free*? §

This doctrine is ſo far from being injurious to *good doings*, that the contrary conceit is the main ſupport of ſinners and hypocrites, in all their *bad doings* in this world. For ſo long as men think, that to gratify their carnal inclinations in pleaſure, and liberty, they will be upon their guard againſt any attempts that are made to turn them therefrom; and will look upon all that make ſuch attempts as enemies to their liberty, and happineſs; and if they cannot deny but the conſequences will be dreadful hereafter; yet ſo long as they think they can turn when they pleaſe, they will put it off *till a more convenient ſeaſon.* Whereas if they were once convinced that they are *captives* in the worſt of *ſlavery*, and that nothing but almighty grace can deliver them, they would be in *haſte* for deliverance

* Mark 5. 26 29. † Luk. 5. 31. ‖ Iſa. 1 5. 6. ¶ Mat. 19. 16. Luk. 10 25. & 18. 18. § Luk. 4. 18. 28. John 8. 33. ‖ Act 24. 25. Pſal. 40. 2. Iſai. 51. 14.

rance from the *horrible pit*. *Solomon* ſaw the *impudent harlot*, encourage herſelf, and entice others to take their *fill* of luſtful *loves*, with this plea, that ſhe had juſt *paid her vows*, and had more *peace offerings with her*. So God ſays to thoſe who had *debased* themſelves *even unto hell*, *Thou art wearied in the greatneſs of thy way; yet ſaidſt thou not, There is no hope*. Tho' they were got ſo near to hell in their conduct, they ſtill hoped to eſcape ruin there; and what was this *hope* built upon? why, the *life of their hands*; this guarded them againſt being *grieved* for all their abominations. The Lord proceeds to ſay, *I will declare thy righteouſneſs, and thy works, for they ſhall not profit thee*. For ſays he, *I dwell,—with him that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit*, Iſa. 57. 9, 10. 12. 15. In the next chapter the prophet is commanded to *lift up his voice like a trumpet to ſhew the houſe of* Jacob *their ſins*; even ſins which were covered under an enquiry after *juſtice*, and a pleaſing pretence of much devotion; and he ſhews them, that the *pleaſure* which they found therein, was a pleaſing conceit that God was indebted to them for theſe doings. Behold! *ye exact all your labours*! And becauſe he did not own their accounts, nor make them ſuch returns as they expected, they complained and ſaid, *Wherefore have we faſted and thou ſeeſt not? have afflicted our ſoul, and thou takeſt no knowledge?* Tho' he did know at the ſame time that they did not *looſe the bands of wickedneſs*, nor *undo heavy burdens, and let the oppreſſed go free*: did not deal their *bread* to the *hungry*, nor *cloaths* to the *naked*, Iſa. 58. 1—6.

Theſe are God's declarations concerning *his people's righteouſneſs*, which is done by the *life of their hands*

† Prov. 7 14 18.

hands; and it all comes to much the ſame with the doings of our firſt parents, after they had got the *knowledge* that was forbidden; it is to *cover their nakedneſs*, and to *hide* even from God. Yea he ſays, they *ſeek deep to hide their counſels from the Lord*, Iſai. 29. 15. That it may not be known what the true nature and ſprings of their actions are. This ſhould put us all upon cloſe conſideration. Great profeſſions of *love in word* and *in tongue*, are the polite mode of our days; but as to *love indeed and in truth*, by *giving to the deſtitute thoſe things which are needful for the body*; or to *lay down our lives for the brethren*, how little of that is to be found? Here men have many plauſible coverings, * tho' John ſays, *How dwelleth the love of God in him?* † *Paul* was once *hid* under as good a covering as any of theſe; yet when divine light ſhined into his heart, he counted all his doings and poſſeſſions *but loſs*, and *dung*, *for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus*; that he might *be found in him, not having* his *own righteouſneſs, but the righteouſneſs of God by faith*. And he warns Chriſt's flock to *beware* of thoſe who taught in the contrary way, as being *dogs* and *evil workers*. Yet this was ſo far from making him careleſs about his behaviour, that he directly renounceth the notion of reſting in what he had *already obtained*, and aſſerts that he was *reaching* and *preſſing* after *perfect* holineſs, *Phil.* 3. 2 8.—16. This ſhews the genuine effects of faith in Chriſt alone for righteouſneſs and ſtrength.

Another

* "And ſome who have no need, complain of want,
"To thoſe whoſe bread they know to be but ſcant;
"Leaſt they ſhould ſomething from their hands expect,
"And ſo by *lying*, *cover* their neglect.". Wright

† Jam. 2 15. 16. 1 Joh. 3. 16.—18.

Another doctrine which many think has a bad tendency, is that of *personal election*; because they often hear sinners say, "If I am elected I shall be saved", and on they run in all abominations.

But this is doing exactly as the devil would have them, even not to *believe* nor regard, *those things which are revealed* that *belong to us*; but to *presume* upon the *secret things* that *belong to God*. * Thus he would have had our Savior presume upon the *secret* support of *angels*, by *casting himself down* from the *pinnacle* of the *temple*, without any regard to the ways that divine *revelation* has directed us to walk in. † Christ's answer proves, that to use the scripture so, is to tempt God, and not to *trust in him*.

Election is as expressly taught as any doctrine in the bible; yet it has been drest in such a form, in our times, that many start at the mention of it, as soon as they would at one covered with a bear-skin, and so determine against the doctrine by their imagination and passions, instead of being governed by scripture and reason. Indeed attempts are made to bring both these against it. One thing advanced for this end is, that to hold that a particular number are elected, would make God a *respecter of persons*, contrary to his word. But if the matter be examined, we shall find that the *respect of persons*, so often condemned, is a *perverting judgment*, thro' a wrong bias, so as to shew that regard to some, and disregard to others, which is unjust. † Now every pious soul detests any such thought concerning God; yet we have early notice of his respecting persons in another sense. He had *respect* unto *Abel*, and to his offering; but unto *Cain* and to his offering he had not respect; which made *Cain very wroth*: whereupon

* Deut. 29. 29. † Mat. 4. 6. 7.
† Deut. 10. 17. 2 Chron. 19 7.

whereupon Jehovah demands the reaſon of it, and ſays, *If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door.* * As if he had ſaid, "Do you think I am ſo unjuſt as not to ac- "cept all that is done well". This demand *Cain* could not anſwer; but turns to talk with his brother, and to end the controverſy ſhed his brother's blood; and we are expreſly told, that the reaſon why he ſlew him was, *Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brothers righteous.* Gen 4. 4,—8. 1 Joh. 3. 12.

Here is ſovereign electing love diſplay'd, in the firſt family of the human race; two brothers come to worſhip God, and he reſpects the perſon and offering of the younger, while the elder is not reſpected. This began a bloody controverſy which is not ended to this day; and it all centers againſt God's doing what he *will* with his *own* grace; ‖ and his not being under any obligation to beſtow it upon any, for all their doings. The ſtate of this controverſy is ſet in a very clear light by the evangeliſt *Luke*, who informs us, that Jeſus, after doing wonders in other places, came to *Nazareth*

* How ſtrange is it, that ſome will bring this demand, as a proof that we are to be accepted for our *well doing* which was made to convict *Cain* of the falſhood of ſuch notions! It was *by faith that* Abel *offered unto God a more excellent ſacrifice than* Cain. *by which he obtained witneſs, that he was righteous.* Both Abel's perſon, and his offering were *accepted in the beloved* Redeemer, ſo that his works were done from a right principle, to a right end; both of which were wanting in *Cain's* offering; therefore his works were not well done, and the *Sin* lay at his *own door.* Every good act flows from love, *out of a pure heart and good conſcience*, and from *faith unfeigned*: and the divine oracles aſſure us, that all who *ſwerve* from this, *underſtand neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm.* Heb. 11. 4. Eph. 1. 6. 1 Tim. 1. 5 7.

‖ Mat. 20. 15.

Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the ſabbath-day, he in their ſynagogue read in the prophecy of *Eſaias*, where it was written, *The ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the goſpel to the poor*, &c. After which he began to ſay unto them, *This day is the ſcripture fulfilled in your ears: and all bare him witneſs, and wondered, at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* But Jeſus ſoon diſcovered what notions they had of *grace*, for he ſaid, *ye will ſurely ſay unto me this proverb, phyſician heal thy ſelf: whatſoever we have heard in Capernaum, do alſo in thy country.* Which ſhews that they ſuppoſed this glorious phyſician was under ſome obligation to them, ſo that if he did not do as great things there, as in other places he would be *partial* and need healing himſelf. But Jeſus aſſures them that there were *many widows* in *Iſrael* in the days of *Elias*; and *many leapers* in the days of *Eliſha*, and yet *none* of them had ſuch favours granted, as were ſhewn to a *widow* among *Sidonians*, and a *leaper* among the Syrians: Which was as much as to ſay, "I am under no obligation to "beſtow my grace upon you, becauſe of your out"ward friendſhip, but have good right to grant it to "*heathens*, while you are left to periſh in your ſins." And obſerve the effect; thoſe who had juſt before wondered at his *gracious words*, now were *filled with wrath, and roſe up and* THRUST *him out*, Luk. 4. 15—29. And why ſhould his ſervants expect better treatment than their maſter had?

As long as any perſon thinks he has any thing in him, or done by him, which can give him the leaſt claim to ſalvation more than others, he will not give in to this doctrine; but all that are brought to ſee their undone eſtate, as it is, have no other gleam of hope than

than by ſovereign grace: For they ſee, that if any good thing were to be done by them, as a neceſſary *condition* of their deliverance, it would be a gone caſe with them for ever. But to hear that God is *gracious to whom he will be gracious*, and that he *juſtifies the ungodly*; this is good news to their poor ſouls: and when they receive it, they can heartily join with *Paul* in bleſſing the father, for all the ſpiritual bleſſings which are laid up in Chriſt, *According as he hath choſen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we ſhou'd be holy. Eph.* i. 3—7.

Obſerve *Paul* ſays, *he hath choſen* us, that we *ſhould be holy*: But the modern notions are, that he chuſeth us becauſe we *are holy*, making that to be the *cauſe*, which *Paul* viewed to be the *effect*. All the controverſy turns upon this point, whether the *good pleaſure of God's will*, or our *free will* be the *cauſe* of our *holineſs and happineſs*. * Jeſus is ſo far from giving foreſeen faith and good works, as the cauſe of *babes*, receiving goſpel grace, inſtead of the *wiſe* and *prudent*, that he reſolves it all into father's pleaſure alone; *for ſo it ſeemed good in his ſight*. Mat. 11.

* One juſtly obſerves, that *coditional election*, "ſets up an "*inferior* cauſe above a *ſuperior*; making election and "ſalvation no more than a *may be*, inſtead of a *ſhall be*. "It repreſents the Almighty as ever fluctuating in his "councils, taking up with new conſultations depen-"dant on the fickle will of man, and the *uncertain* "*acts* that flow therefrom: by which method he is "brought in ſaying. O! I will if they will; and O! "that they may will to believe, become holy, dili-"gently and perſeveringly by improving their ſtock of "free-will abilities, that they may be ſaved: neverthe-"leſs not *my will* but *their will* be done!

Chandler's doctrine of grace, printed at Boſton 1744. page 208.

11. 26. And if any man teach otherwiſe, than theſe wholſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the doctrines according to godlineſs, we are aſſured that he is both *proud* and *ignorant*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 3—5. And tho' ſuch generally deny their partaking of *Adam's* ſin, yet they at the ſame time *bear witneſs thae they allow the deeds of their father*, by queſtioning the truth of what God has *plainly ſaid*: and aſpiring to be as *Gods to know*, inſtead of keeping their place as creatures, to *receive and obey*.

Theſe great pretenders to reaſon, would deſpiſe a ſtateſman or general, that ſhould lay ſuch a plan of proceedings as would need perpetual alterations, and was liable to final diſappointment: yet ſuch is their ſcheme of *conditional decrees*.

But methinks I hear ſome ſay, "We have one objection that is invincible againſt all this reaſoning, and that is, there are many who profeſs a full belief of theſe doctrines, that are in fact ſome of the worſt of men". I own tis a lamentable fact, that there are ſuch men, and ſo there were in *James's* day; and he compares them to *dead bodies*, and ſays, *as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo*, Jam. 2. 26. The *Jews* had the *form of knowledge, and of the truth in the law*: * ſo men may have the form of doctrines of faith and a *body of divinity*, under the goſpel, and yet both of them conduct ſo as to cauſe the *name of God to be blaſphemed thro' them*. Yet who would reject all *bodies*, becauſe there are ſome *dead ſtinking ones*? We read of the *ſpirit of faith*; and of *living by faith* &c. † and ſo all ought to live. Again *Jude* calls ſuch perſons *filthy dreamers*; now who will ſay that their waking thoughts and views, have not good influence on their conduct, becauſe they may have many thoughts and views in

* Rom. 2. 20, 24. 2 Cor. 4 13. Gal. 3 11. *Heb.* 10. 38.

dreams, while they remain asleep on their beds.

However, since you are for appealing to *facts*, we will try a few of them. None that believe the scriptures can reasonably deny that the *Jews* had high notions of their power to do good works: *Paul* speakethexpressly, that they *followed after the law of righteousness*, and had a *zeal for God*; and he is as express concerning the reason why they did not attain to it, *because they sought it not by faith*, Rom. 9. 31, 32. 10 2 They had no such faith as he taught in sovereign decrees, and sovereign mercy to helpless sinners. No, they held to works which they could do, to entitle them to divine blessings. Now let us see what fruits these principles produced; they *both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and persecuted the apostles: they pleased not God and were contrary to all men*, &c. 1 Thes. 2. 15. 16. But the apostles on the other hand, preached that both *Jew* and Gentile were all under sin, and that by grace we are saved thro' faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. And these doctrines spread their victorious and happy influence as far as the *Roman* conquests had ever extended.

Afterwards there came on a terrible *falling away*, and the *man of sin* was revealed, who opposed these doctrines, and carried his notions of man's power to do good works so far as to hold, that he could do more than were required. But instead of these principles producing *good works*; their *bad works* got to such a length, that the Pope's *indulgencies* to commit sin with hopes of another pardon, were openly sold by their ministers, to get money. This shocked *Luther*; and he and *Calvin*, and others were moved to *protest* against those abominations, and boldly to preach those doctrines, which have born *Calvins* name ever since. And none will deny that they produced great and

good

good effects then, but such as are either secret or open friends to *popery*. Great was the spread, and happy the influence of these doctrines in our nation at those times; yet the contrary principles have since extensively prevailed. And a noted divine observed eleven years ago, to an assembly of the national clergy, that "'Tis a general complaint, that our churches are less frequented than they used formerly to be, and that degeneracy of manners universally prevails. Now says he I may venture to affirm, that the *moral preaching* so much in vogue, is the cause of all this. In short we have preached morality so long, that we have hardly any morality left; and this *moral preaching* has made our people so very immoral, that there are no lengths of wickedness which they are afraid of running into".*

I am not insensible that many are ready to reject this testimony, because it comes from a friend to the doctrines which they dislike; therefore out of the abundant evidence which might be produced from the other side, I will touch upon what appears in one that the nation has owned to be a *rational* writer. I mean Dr. *John Brown*, whose *estimate of the manners and principle of the times*, published ten years ago, met with such a reception that we are told it had six editions in seven months. Therein he gives a very rational account of the present state of our nation, deduced from plain facts. He says, "We may with truth and candour conclude, that the ruling character of the present times is that of a vain, *luxurious*, and selfish effeminacy". And which has prevailed to such a degree among them, who are called *polite*, that he says, "To suppose a man of fashion

* Mr. *Jone's* Sermon at the visitation of the Archdeacon of *Surry*, Sept. 1755 page 16, 17.

" ſway'd in his conduct by a regard to *futurity*, is an " affront to the delicacy and refinement of his *taſte*. " Hence the day ſet apart by the laws of his country, " for religious ſervice, he derides and affronts as a " *vulgar* and *obſolete* inſtitution". And they have ſo loſt a ſenſe of *honour*, that he ſays, " They laugh " at the picture of their own follies; they go home, " and *without a bluſh repeat them*". And he ſhews, " that the principle of regard to the publick good " is ſo far loſt, and a ſyſtem of political ſelf-intereſt " introduced in its room, that " a foundation is laid " for *endleſs diſſention* in the ſtate". Thus (ſays he) " by gradual and unperceived decline, we ſeem glid- " ing down to ruin. We laugh, we ſing, we feaſt, " we play: we *adopt* every *vanity*, and *catch* at eve- " ry lure, thrown out to us by the *nation* that is *plan- " ning* our *deſtruction*".

Thus he points out our *danger*; and dreadful experiments ſince have confirm'd the truth of theſe obſervations. But what ſhall give relief in this doleful caſe? why Dr. *Brown* ſays, he had it in his thoughts, to have proceeded to the conſideration of their *moſt practicable remedies*: but (ſays he) as the cloſet-*pro- " jects* of retired and ſpeculative men, often *are* re- " garded, as *chimerical*; he was therefore unwilling, " at preſent, to hazard the diſcredit of ſuch an at- " tempt". And goes on to tell us of two kinds of remedies; the one *laſting*, the other *temporary*: and ſays he, " The firſt ſeems totally impracticable at " *preſent*: for as they ſuppoſe a *change* of manners " and principles, this may juſtly be regarded as an " impoſſible event, during the preſent age; and is " rather to be wiſhed than hoped for, in the next". See fifth edition of his *eſtimate*, page 54 61, 64, 121 144, 212, 218, 219.

Here

Here reader is a fair opportunity given us to diſcern the difference between antient and modern chriſtianity. Ancient chriſtianity declares both *Jews* and *Gentiles* to be *all under ſin*; and that we muſt be *created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works*. *

But the modern ſcheme tells of a great deal that we *can do and muſt do*, in order to obtain ſalvation. The ancient plan, while it ſhews our *malady*, diſcovers at the ſame time a *preſent* and complete *remedy*: † but the late ſcheme flatters us along 'till we get to the brink of ruin, and then alas! there is no *laſting remedy* to be *hoped* for in *this age*; and why? becauſe it ſuppoſeth "A CHANGE", which according to that plan is "an IMPOSSIBLE event". Again the ancient plan gave courage boldly to preach the *goſpel* at *Rome*, which was then the ſeat of the greateſt *warriors* and *Philoſophers* in the world; and emboldened the preacher to aſſert the uſe he made of *cloſet projects* in his work; and alſo to beſeech the *brethren* there to *ſtrive together with him* therein. § While the late *rational ſcheme* has taken heart and courage ſo much from a *miniſter* and *doctor* of *modern divinity*, as to make him "unwilling at preſent, to *hazard* the *diſcredit* of ſuch "an attempt"; even in his own nation, whoſe manners and *weapons* he viewed to be "degenerated into "thoſe of *women*". ¶ Yea, and at time too when he ſaw them "laughing, ſinging, playing, and adopting "*every vanity*, and perceived not that they were "*gliding down to ruin*?

This ſoul-deſtroying ſcheme had got great footing in *New-England*, before the Lord appeared for us years

* Rom. 3. 9. Eph. 2. 10. † Rom. 5. 20, 21.
§ Rom. 15. 30. Theſe *projects* have often ſaved nations from ruin, ſee Exod. 32. 30. 2 Kings 19. Dan. 9.
¶ Eſtimate page 125.

26 years ago, and brought forth a number of men to preach up the doctrines of man's undone condition in himself, and of help alone by sovereign grace, in a bold and moving manner; and our *enemies themselves* cannot deny, that multitudes then really thought those doctrines to be true. Well, what were the effects?

Why, *taverns* were forsaken, and had scarce any company but travellers; *courts* had little to do when they met; frolicks were dropt; and an *anxious* pursuits of the *world* was in a great measure forsaken. But places of religious worship, both publick and private were crowded; multitudes flocked to hear the word, *in season and out of season*; *conversation* was chiefly on religious subjects and soul concern; old *quarrels* were made up &c. Yea, when a little army from *New-England* was called away to attack the enemies strong hold at *Cape-Briton*, their language when they went off was, "Pray for us while we fight "for you" and they were crowned with such success as proved a principal means of putting an end to that bloody war.

"Ay, say some, but how have things turned out "since"? Answer, they have turned out exactly according to the scriptural account. In many the *word* had no more *root*, than *seed* sown by the highway; others heard *with joy*, and yet in time of *temptation fell away*: Some who seemed to pay a more lasting regard to truth, yet are *choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life*, so as to *bring no fruit to perfection*. While a few *chosen ones keep the word*, and *bring forth fruit with patience*. Jesus had the same end in view in giving this account, as he had in telling the twelve, that one of them would lift up his heel against him, namely, that when it came to pass they *might believe*, Joh. 13. 19. But behold and be

amazed!

amazed! Many now ſtrengthning themſelves *againſt believing*, becauſe theſe things *are come to paſs!* And men have a gain ſtraitned their wits to perſuade people, that they are able with ordinary aſſiſtance to perform the conditions of the goſpel, ſo as finally to obtain eternal life. And theſe notions have been the moſt openly eſpouſed in this country of late, that ever they have been ſince chriſtianity was known here; and the effects are too open to need any proof. *Pride* and *extravagence* involved people to ſuch a degree, that in ſeveral counties they often had more than a thouſand writs at a *court*. And if we review the late commotions about the *ſtamp-act*, what cauſe have we all to be abaſed in the duſt, when we think how many more aſſemblies were gathered, of all ranks, to conſult what creature power or policy could do in the caſe, than there were to *faſt* and *cry* to the *creator* for help? How different is this from the conduct of God's ancient people? Eph. 4. 3. And tho' truth ſays, *The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whither ſoever he will*; yet the *rejoicings* immediately after the news of our deliverance, which were managed ſo as to deſtroy a number of *lives*; and the *thanks* if not *worſhip* that were addreſſed to ſeveral *inſtruments* of our relief; while there was ſuch a viſible backwarkneſs for *giving thanks* to the great *author* thereof, put me in mind of the note of a worthy expoſitor upon the *Philiſtians* conduct, who aſſembled to *offer a great ſacrifice to Dagon and to rejoice*; *for they ſaid, our God hath delivered Sampſon our enemy into our hand.* The note is this "Tho' "*Sampſon*'s harlot had done it, and they had paid "her for it, yet they attribute it to their *God*, ſuch "was their blindneſs and ſtupidity; and yet this may "ſhame us believers in the true God, who are ſo

"backward

" backward to aſcribe to him the great things he
" does for us, when ſuch heathens were ſo forward
" to give glory to their falſe deities, without any
" foundation for it".

Upon the whole, as the *Jews* earneſtly denied Jeſus his being a *King*; whiſe their trembling fear of him, and raiſing ſuch force as they did againſt him, plainly *ſaid* that he *was a King*; ſo now all theſe, and many other *facts*, which are brought againſt theſe doctrines plainly *ſay they are true.* * Many who oppoſe theſe doctrines make great pretences to dignity of ſentiments; and one of their high notions is, that " Becauſe the deity can receive no profit from us, " therefore his great end in all his works and diſ- " penſations, is his creatures haypineſs". But if 'tis aſked, why then are not all his creatures made happy? The reply is, " Their own folly prevents it". So that they have got a deity too high to be *ſerved by them*; yet he is ſo low that he muſt *ſerve them* with all his might; and when he has done his beſt, many of his creatures are too hard for him, and fruſtrate his great deſign of making of them all happy! This is turning things *upſide down* with a witneſs! *Iſa.* 29. 16.

Another of their high notions is, " That they will " receive nothing for truth, but what they can com- " prehend with their reaſon". Tho' by the way, they expect to be credited in the accounts they give of many of their deep diſcoveries, which at the ſame time they do not ſuppoſe common people can fathom. But forſooth! they are too big to credit what Jehovah declares, any further than they can comprehend it:

*Many *facts* from the remarkable effects of theſe doctrines, in ſundry particular towns and villages in various parts of our land lately, might greatly ſtrengthen our argument; but that would ſwell this diſcourſe ſo far that I muſt omit them for the preſent.

it! Nothing is more certain than this is, that a *God* which a *creature* can comprehend is an *idol.* The deity which *Paul* worshiped was quite another kind of Being. Rom. 11, 33—36. And Heathenish principles will alway lead to heathenish practice. Now one of the most unnatural barbarities, that I ever heard of in the old *natives* of this country, was, their getting their *powows* when they had a friend taken sick, to try their magic art to find out whether the sick would die or not: And if the answer was that he *would die:* then no farther pains were used, but they let him die as soon as he would. Compare this with our modern reasoners against *certain decrees,* and see how much better hearts we have than them old *heathens.* If *they* thought their friends death was determined, that made them neglect the use of means for natural life: *these* say if they believed the event was appointed, they would neglect all means for spiritual life. *They* neglected means to keep *off* death; *these* use means to hasten it *on.* *They* neglected *others* bodies; these neglect their *own* souls. These *heathens* might be chargeable with *negative* murder of others bodies; but these *christians,* positively murder their own souls!

The son of God knew, and often foretold what sufferings he should go thro'; yet, *in the days of his flesh, he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save from death, and was heard in that he feared: tho' he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,* Heb 5. 7, 8. And he gave express warning to his disciples, that they would all be offended because of him:—upon which *Peter* declared, that tho' all men should be offended he never would. To which Jesus reply'd, *Verily I say unto thee, that this Night before the cock crow, thou shalt*

deny me thrice: Yet this certain declaration was ſo far from excuſing his neglect of his maſters caution, to *watch and pray*; and his ſloth, raſhneſs and cowardice, that when *Peter* remembered thoſe words of Jeſus, *he went out and wept bitterly*, Mat. 26. 31—75. In *Paul's* voyage to *Rome*. after a long tempeſt had lain upon them, he ſtood forth in the midſt of their company and ſaid, *I exort you to be of good chear: for there ſhall be no loſs of* any man's *life among you, but of the Ship*. And ſhewed how this was revealed to him by an angel; and then adds, *I believe God, that it ſhall be even as it was told me*. Yet ſoon upon it, as the ſhipmen were about to flee out of the ſhip, by letting down their boat into the ſea, *Paul* ſaid to the centurion, and to the ſoldiers, *Except theſe abide in the Ship, ye cannot be ſaved*, Acts 27 21—31 He believ'd that the means and end were connected together. When *Daniel* underſtood by books, that the years were near or quite expired, which the Lord ſpake of by *Jeremiah* the prophet, that he would accompliſh ſeventy years in the deſolations of *Jeruſalem*, he *ſet his face unto the Lord God to ſeek by prayer and ſupplications, with faſtings, and ſackcloth and aſhes*, for the fulfilment of what God had abſolutely promiſed.

Now all theſe (and many others) thought there was a conſiſtancy between foreordination of events in our great *Ruler*; and earneſt prayers and endeavours in his *ſubjects*, for the avoiding of all evil, and the obtaining of all the good we want. They thought that the certainty of the event no ways took away the creatures liberty, or made him leſs worthy of praiſe or blame for what he did. but ſome are lifted up in our days ſo high, as not to be content with the place of men, but have *ſet their heart as the heart of God*:

and

and *Behold! they age wiſer than Daniel*, Chriſt, or his *apoſtles*, and explode the ſentiments which they held, and practiſed upon! * However, as their *heart is lifted up*, and they *have corrupted their wiſdom*, therefore (without repentance) God will *bring them down to the pit*, in ſuch a manner as ſhall cauſe *aſtoniſhment* and *terror* to *all that know them* Ezek. 28. 2—6, 8, 17—19.

III. Theſe things may teach us the evil nature, and pernicious tendency of a prevailing cuſtom in our day, encouraging perſons to profeſs religion, and come into the church *without this faith*. *James* calls thoſe profeſſors *vain men*, who have not ſuch a *living faith* as *Abraham* had: and *Paul* ſays *with the heart man believeth unto righteouſneſs, and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto ſalvation.* When the *eunuch* aſked what hindred his being admitted to the initiating ordinance of the goſpel church, *Philip* ſaid, *If thou believeſt with* ALL THINE HEART, *thou mayeſt*. Yet Mr. *Solomon Stoddard* of *Northampton* about half a century ago, openly eſpouſed the contrary ſen-

 timents

* Mr Edwards's remark is worthy of notice here, which is, "That moſt of the arguments from ſcripture, "which *Arminians* make uſe of to ſupport their ſcheme, "are no other than *begging the queſtion*": for they firſt conclude that theſe principles which have been juſt mentioned, are inconſiſtent with the uſe of commands, threatnings, promiſes, exortations and the like, and then heap up ſcriptures that are full of ſuch things; upon which they boaſt they have demonſtrated their point: whereas the point in diſpute, is whether the certainty of the event takes away the uſe of theſe means or not? and 'till they can prove that it does, all ſuch proofs from ſcripture to ſupport their ſcheme is mear *beggery*. See his enquiry into the modern notion of free-will, Part 4. Sect. 11.

timents, and held that the Lord's Supper was a converting ordinance, and that persons that were not scandalous in their lives, might come to it, tho' they did not think themselves converted. This scheme, was by one of our fathers, in that day, compared to *Solomon* of old's setting up the *high places*: and after generations were not more fond of those *high places*, than many in our times are of *this scheme*.

Tho' we have had a notable experiment of the evil of it in Mr. *Stoddard*'s church; for his grand-son and successor Mr. *Edwards* practised thereon 'till he had got a very large church, and then upon his attempting to have some of them called to an account for their *lacivious* and *obscene discourse*, the town was "suddenly all on a blaze", and little could be done in the affair. And upon their finding that he had changed his sentiments about that point, they laid hold of that as a handle against him, and never would rest until they had got him away. Thus when the world had got into the church, they would not be governed by divine rule: they would sooner *thrust* away one of the best divines that this age has seen. See Mr. Edwards's life printed in Boston 1765, page 53, &c. *

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* The council which concurred with the church in dismissing of him, say, "We have had no other objection against him, but what relates to his sentiments upon that point". And what those sentiments were, they give us in these words, viz. his "Insisting upon it as "necessary to the admission of members to full com-"munion, that they should make a profession of *sanctifying grace*; whereas the brethren are of opinion, "that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance, and "consequently, that persons if they have a competency of knowledge, and are of a blameless life, may be "admitted to the Lord's table, altho' they make *no such* "*profession*". printed result of said council page 3, 4. Jun 22 1750.

A profeſſion of chriſtianity neceſſarily implies faith in Chriſt, and a devotedneſs to him; and if there is not a meaſure of that, truly in the heart, the profeſſion is *falſe*; and to encourage men to *lie* before God and man, in order to be converted, looks very ſhocking. But to avoid this abſurdity, Mr. *Williams* (who wrote againſt Mr. *Edwards* on this point) ſays page 47. that "Nothing ſhould be expreſſed in the words "of the profeſſion, but what ſome unſanctified men "may ſay, and ſpeak true". upon which Mr. E. replies, that "There are two competitors for the king-"dom of this world, *Chriſt* and *Satan*; the deſign "of a publick profeſſion of religion is, to declare which "ſide men are"; and aſks, "Is it the conſtitution of "King *George*, and the *Britiſh* parliament, that men "ſhould take oaths of allegiance, contrived in words "of indeterminate ſignification, to the end that men "who are in their hearts enemies to King *George* "and friends to the *pretender*, may uſe them and "ſpeak true"? Reply to Mr. Williams page 39, 40.

The principal arguments that are brought to ſupport theſe notions are taken from *Abraham*'s covenant, and the national church which ſprang from him; notwithſtanding the *meſſenger* who came to prepare the way of the goſpel diſpenſation, warned ſouls againſt ſuch notions, and ſhew'd that God was able *of ſtones to raiſe up children to Abraham*. And when many of the *Jews* believed on our Lord, he ſaid to them, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed; and ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free*. This they immediately reſented, and ſaid *we* be Abraham's *ſeed and were never in bondage*. But Jeſus aſſured them, that *whoſoever committeth ſin, is the ſervant of ſin*. And adds, *If ye were* Abraham's *children, ye would do the work of*

Abraham

Abraham —ye are of your father the devil. *Joh.* 8. 30—44. Obſerve this well; here was a great number of believers who were ready to profeſs Chriſt's name, if that would have done, but he was for having *diſciples indeed*, who ſhould *know the truth*, ſo as to make them *free* from the ſervice of ſin and ſatan, without which he would not own them to be *children of Abraham*. No, inſtead of that, for all their faith he declares them to be *children of the devil*.

Paul was very careful to diſtinguiſh to the *Romans*, the difference between *Abraham's* natural and ſpiritual children; and ſhews that only the latter were by the goſpel *counted for thee ſeed*, Rom. 9. 7, 8. And when ſome teachers who *deſired to make a fair ſhew in the fleſh*, and avoid the *croſs*, were zealous to introduce the national, *doing* plan, under the chriſtian name, into the churches of *Galatia*, how ſmartly does he warn them churches againſt that ſcheme? yea tho' it had come from apoſtles or *an angel from heaven*, and ſays, *who hath bewitched you that you ſhould not obey the truth*? And bids them *know that they which are of faith, the ſame are the chilaren of Abraham; and adds, If ye be Chriſt's, then are ye Abraham's ſeed, and heirs according to the promiſe*. Gal. 1. 8. and 3. 1, 7, 29. & 6. 12.

This apoſtle knew well how pleaſing this ſcheme was to mankind, and that he could have avoided *perſecution* by embracing it: but then he knew as well what the conſequence would be on the other hand; and therefore ſays, *If I yet pleaſed men, I ſhould not be the ſervant of Chriſt*, Gal. 1, 10. & 6. 12. And how can any that proceed in that way, be ſervants of Chriſt now, any more than in *Paul's* day.

Mr. *Edwards's* ſmart remark may deſerve our notice here. Mr. *W.* and many others having made much

uſe

uſe of the parable of the *tares of the field*, to ſupport their cauſe; tho' Jeſus ſays, *the field is the world*, yet they muſt needs have it to be the *church*: Mr. E. obſerves, that if we ſhould allow ti to be ſo, it would not help their cauſe; for the *tares* are plainly repreſented as having no juſt right there, but an *enemy* bro't them in; and too, while the ſervants *ſlept*, who ought to have been upon their watch to keep the enemy out. He therefore ſays' " Perhaps ſome would be ready " to make the reflection, that thoſe churches whoſe " practice is agreable to the looſe principles Mr. *W.* " eſpouſes, do that at noon-day; in the preſence of " God, angels and men, which the devil did in the night, *while men ſlept*" ! Reply page 103.

Hence IV. If *this faith* be ſo neceſſary in *profeſſors*, how much more in *teachers* of chriſtianity? Let any man have what elſe he may, yet if he has not *this faith* to *ſee* HIM *who is inviſible*, and to *look at unſeen and eternal things*; he will be governed even in his religion by the *things which are temporal*. It was this alone that enabled *Paul* and his companions to *preach not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*; and themſelves the churches *ſervants for Jeſus ſake*: even becauſe *God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs*, had *ſhined into their hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt*. 2 Cor. 4. 5. 6, 1. Some would turn theſe off as *extraordinary* things; and they profeſs to be lead in an *ordinary way*; but the *ordinary way* of every man is to ſeek *ſelf* in one ſhape or another, if he is not delivered therefrom by ſuch ſupernatural influence.

Our Savior ſays, *Where your treaſure is, there will your hearts be alſo.* And goes on plainly to ſhew forth that if our *eye be not ſingle* but *evil*, the light that

that is in us is darkneſs. Who then will dare to ſay, that a man of great knowledge without a *ſingle eye*, may be a ſafe guide? or that they can now *ſerve two maſters?* Mat. 6 21—24.

Many who cannot deny theſe truths, yet evade their practical influence, by the plea that we cannot know who are ſincere, and who not. Our great *law-giver* ſaw all this, and therefore, after cautioning againſt wrong *judging*; proceeds very early to give plain rules for right judgment in theſe affairs; and ſays, *Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither caſt your pearls before ſwine. Beware of falſe prophets, which come to you in ſheeps cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye ſhall know them by their fruits*, Mat. 7. 6, 15, 16. Nothing is more common in ſcripture than for things which are devoted to God's worſhip to be called *holy*. In *Ezekiel*'s viſion of the *temple* he was ordered to ſhew to ſuch as were *aſhamed of their iniquities*, the *forms* and *laws of the houſe*, even of the *comings* in and *goings out thereof*, *and all the ordinances thereof*; and he ſays, *The whole limit thereof round about, ſhall be moſt holy: behold* THIS *is the law of the houſe.* And again, *Thus ſaith the Lord God, No ſtranger uncircumciſed in heart, nor uncircumciſed in fleſh ſhall enter into my ſanctuary*, Ezek. 43. 11, 12. and 44. 9. *Pearls* are to be kept as choice treaſure, in diſtinction from things for common uſe. Each *gate* of the *holy city* was *one Pearl*, Rev. 21. 21. *

* Tho' this is ſo plain, yet great numbers would have it, that *pearls* mean *inward experiences*, which they ſay are not to be told before carnal men. But if *Paul* greatly tranſgreſſed this rule, for he declared the peculiar circumſtances of his converſion before his perſecutors, both at *Jeruſalem* and *Ceſaria*. And we are all required to be *ready always to give an anſwer to every man that aſketh us a reaſon of the hope that is in us, with meekneſs and fear*, 1 Pet. 3. 15.

Peter compares falſe teachers and profeſſors to *dogs* and *ſwine*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. Now compare theſe things together, and how plain is the command not to give *holy ordinances* to ſuch men, nor open the gates of the church to any but the *righteous nation which keepeth the truth*? Iſai. 26. 2. And who can fully deſcribe the *vending* and *filthy* work, which churches have often met with for not attending duly to this rule.

What many ſeem to underſtand by *fruits* is *Sheeps-cloathing*; their making a ſhew & appearance like ſheep: But Jeſus has told us plainly what he means by fruits. *Every tree*, ſays he, *is known by his own fruit*:—*a good man out of the good treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treaſure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth ſpeaketh.* Luk 6. 44. 45. And we may obſerve that when *Peter* declared the faith which was given him by a ſuper-natural revelation, Chriſt anſwered, *Bleſſed* art thou; and immediately ſays, *thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build my Church* Mat. 16. 16—18. *Peter* ſignifies a *ſtone*; he was but one ſtone which was to be laid in the building upon this glorious rock; and he ſays to other ſaints, *ye alſo as lively ſtones are built up a ſpiritual houſe*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. Our Lord's ſpeaking of *building* his *church*, directly after that noble declaration of faith, evidently points out the *manner* as well as *matter* of this building. As if he had ſaid, "The way in which I will *build* my "church is by perſons *declaring* thus with their "*mouths*, what they believe in their *hearts* concerning me? * Hence, on the day of penticoſt, when many were *pricked in their hearts*, and cried, *What ſhall we do*? *Peter* pointed out to them the way of relief;

* Rom. 10. 10.

and *as many as gladly received his* word *were baptized*, and added to the church, and they continued ſtedfaſtly in the *apoſtles doctrine and fellowſhip*—They declared both their conviction and converſion, and thus the firſt goſpel church was built up, and walk'd in fellowſhip: and the apoſtle *John*'s account of the way wherein chriſtian fellowſhip is begotten and promoted perfectly agrees herewith. He ſays, *That which we have ſeen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowſhip with us: and truely our fellowſhip is with the father, and with his ſon Jeſus Chriſt* 1 *Joh.* 1. 3.

When *Peter* was directed by a viſion from heaven to go to *Cornelius*, and went *without gainſaying*; yet when he came there, he aſked and received a diſtinct account of the ſteps of experience which had led *Cornelius* thus far. Then he opened his mouth and preached Chriſt to all preſent; and while he ſpake, the *holy Ghoſt fell on all them which heard the word*, whereupon they were commanded to be baptized. Thus the primitive churches were built up.

On the other hand, when one who had been baptized as a believer, *ſpoke* that out of the abundance of his heart, which diſcovered that his *heart was not right with God*, *Peter* ſaid, *Thou haſt neither part nor lot in this matter*, Act. 8. 20, 21. So the church of *Epheſus* is commended becauſe ſhe could *not bare them which were evil*; *and had tried them which ſaid they were apoſtles, and were not*; *and had found them liars*, Rev. 2. 2. This diſcipline was neglected in the church of *Corinth*; therefore *Paul* ſays to them, *Know ye not, that a little leaven, leavens the whole lump? what have I to do, to judge them that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? therefore put away from among your ſelves that wicked perſon*, 1 Cor. 5. 6. 12, 13. And to the churches of *Galatia*, he

he ſays concerning thoſe who had *perverted the gospel, a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. I would they were even cut off that trouble you*, Gal. 5. 9. 12. *John* ſpeaking concerning the doctrine of Chriſt, ſays, *Look to your ſelves:—if there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your houſe*, 2 John 8—10.

Query, do not *actions* ſpeak louder than *words*? Anſwer, in many caſes they do: yet how do we know what actions mean but by words? for inſtance, *Simon offered* the apoſtle's *money*; now had he done it for their ſupport in the Lord's work, or for them to diſtribute to poor ſaints, the *action* would have been good; tho' by what he *ſaid* when he offered the money, he diſcover'd that his *heart* was not right in the ſight of God. This hint may ſhew the harmony there is between thoſe two different deſcriptions of the laſt judgment, namely, by thy *words* thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy *words* thou ſhalt be condemned: And, then ſhall he reward every man according to his *works*, Mat. 12. 37. & 16. 27. Indeed, *fruits* comprehend all that men *bring forth out of their hearts*, in their principles, experience, converſation and conduct; and hereby we are to *know them*, and to act towards them according to the cleareſt light we can gain. * If theſe divine rules were duly regarded they

* Some talk'd much of a diſtinction between *private* and *publick charity*, and aſſert that *private charity* will not do to *act upon in publick affairs*. If by private charity they mean an *inward perſwaſion*, which is not governed by *intelligible evidence*, I readily concur with them: though I fear what is often intended by that diſtinction, is that we ſhould receive all who are willing to make a public profeſſion of religion, if nothing is openly objected againſt them, whether we have any proper evdience to

would ſoon ſettle the controverſy we have had concerning who has a right to preach, and who not: for according to theſe rules, if *Peter*, *Paul*, or an *angel from heaven* ſhould come to us, and not bring the *doctrines of Chriſt*, but a *perverted goſpel*, we ought to reject them. While all thoſe who have *renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but* who *by manifeſtation of the truth, commend themſelves to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God*, ought to be received 2 *Cor.* 4. 2. † Theſe rules are *rational* as well as *ſcriptural*. Saints are often called *witneſſes* Iſa. 43. 10. 1 *Tim.* 6. 12. *Heb.* 12. 1. A witneſs is to teſtify what he knows concerning a matter in diſpute; and God's witneſſes are to teſtify what they know of him, and his truth, which the world is ſo full of diſputes about. Now

our conſciences that they experimentally know the truth or no. Great noiſe alſo has been made about *infallible knowledge*, and of aſſuming God's prerogative to *ſearch the heart*, and the like; but this is all beſide the proper queſtion which is, whether we muſt act towards men, according to what they *pretend* to be, or upon the cleareſt *evidence* we can gain of what they *really* are?

† Here many are ready to cry, alas! what times are we falſen into? a party ſpirit encouraged, and one miniſter condemning another: how much better were former days than theſe are? But they forget that *Solomon* tells them, that they *enquire not wiſely concerning this*. Eccl. 7. 2. there always have been contentions ever ſince *two ſeeds* have been in the world; and he muſt be very ignorant of his bible who does not know that true and falſe miniſters have ſpoken againſt each other in all ages, tho' with very different tempers; yea, when the teacher of teachers came into the world, what diviſions were there among God's people about him? *Some ſaid he is a good man: others ſay nay; but he deceiveth the people.* And he was ſo far from denying the peoples right to judge of

ſuch

Now every rational mind, in order to be ſatisfied in important affairs, wants to hear witneſſes tell, not only that a things *is ſo*; but alſo how they *came to know it to be ſo.* Hence *civil courts* will not take up with *written evidences*, if the perſons can be had, for they ſuppoſe there is danger of being impoſed upon by falſe teſtimony; therefore they would examine evidences critically, in order to come at the truth. Neither will men be content to have this done by one or more in private, and ſo have what they diſcover reported to the court: No, all who are concerned muſt hear what is ſaid; yea, and have liberty to aſk what queſtions

ſuch matters, that he gave them plain inſtructions to direct them therein. He firſt ſhews the neceſſity of being engaged to *do*, as well as *know* the *Fathers will*, if we would expect to be guided by him; and then lays down a general rule to judge teachers by: viz. *He that ſpeaketh of himſelf, ſeeketh his own glory, but he that ſeeketh his glory that ſent him, the ſame is true, and no unrighteouſneſs is in him.* And having given them the rule, he ſays, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment*, Joh. 7. 12. 17, 18, 24. Others judged according to the *appearance*: and thoſe who *appeared in Moſes ſeat*, and according to the eſtabliſhed religion, they judged to be right; but *this man* who had *never learned* in their ſchools, or been *approbated* by their *rulers* and ſtanding teachers, and was admired only by people *who knew not the law*; they accounted a *deceiver*, ver. 15, 47—49. Notwithſtanding he *ſpake as never man ſpake*, and conſtantly *went about doing good.* But he calls us to judge *righteouſly* according to what is *really ſaid* and done, and not according to the *appearance* and ſhow that men make. Thoſe who *ſeek their own glory*, will be more concerned to have the eſteem and approbation of men, than to *approve themſelves unto God*, by *rightly dividing the word of truth*, 2 Tim. 2 15. or to *approve themſelves as the miniſters of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in neceſſities, in diſtreſſes*, &c. 2 Cor. 6. 4—10. as *theſe* miniſters did, which *theſe* claim a *ſucceſſion* from.

queſtions they think proper: and the fear of witneſſes, baſhfulneſs, or blundering in their ſtory, will not be admitted as a ſufficient reaſon againſt this way of proceeding; and why? becauſe their honour, intereſt, or life is at ſtake.

Yet where the divine honor, and the life of ſouls is at ſtake, the contrary method is taken. For many have given out that they had rather receive two hypocrites (nay ſome ſay ten) than ſhut out one ſaint.* And for fear perſons ſhould blunder in their account, *written teſtimonies* have been received, which have often been *framed* as well as *penned* by other hands; perſons by ſigns have own'd it as their teſtimony, when God and their own conſciences knew it was not ſo. Thus churches have gone on; till of late many have dropt, having particular accounts of experience in any way; and receive members only upon a *general* aſſent to chriſtianity. And ſome have been ſo ſtupid as to try to juſtify ſuch conduct by the *eunuch*'s confeſſion *Acts* 8. 37. as if their openly aſſenting to that which they were always taught was true, was parallel to his declaring his hearty belief of that, which Jews and Gentiles all ſaid was falſe. *Philip* likewiſe had been particularly acquainted with his *ſoul exerciſe* about theſe things before, ſo that he had good evidence of the *eunuch*'s converſion before he baptized him.

The generality of thoſe who are going on in the ways above deſcribed, are very ready often to caution us againſt *judging*:—yet if we will not run with them to the ſame exceſs of abomination, they can ſoon ſpeak evil of us, and *judge our hearts* at a great rate. But the things I have now related are not ſecret ſurmiſes,

* i. e. Had rather receive 2 or 10 enemies than hold one friend in ſuſpenſe, 'till they could obtain evidence that he was a friend?

miſes, they are moſt open and notorious facts; and if any would give me a better reaſon for this difference in conduct, than this, I ſhould be glad to hear it; viz. That moſt men are wiſer for time, than for eternity, and have more concern about their own intereſt, than the intereſt of Chriſt's kingdom in the world. And in vain do men wiſh for better times, while divine rule is thus diſregarded; they might as well look for peace while enemies are not guarded againſt; or for health while contagion is freely ſpread.

Therefore, V. Theſe things ſhould rouſe us all, and engage our ſouls to regard without delay the only method of relief in our deplorable circumſtances, before iniquity prove the ruin of our nation and land.

But here I am come to the moſt difficult point in the whole chriſtian plan, I mean applying the call and command to impotent creatures. None but God can keep us from ſtraying to the right or left hand here. Multitudes hold it to be unreaſonable for God to require that which the creature cannot do; but the abſurdity of ſuch a notion appears!

1. Becauſe the divine command ever remains *holy, juſt and good*, altho' we are *carnal ſold under ſin*, Rom. 7. 12, 14. What a ſtrange conceit would it be, to conclude the creditors claims to be unjuſt, becauſe of the bankruptcy of the *debtor*!

2. All ſin is a voluntary contrariety to the divine will; how reaſonable then is it that we ſhould be called and commanded to that which muſt be our hearty choice, or we never can be ſaved? and that is *turning from ſin to God*, Ezek. 33. 10. 11.

3. Nothing but the light and power of the command, brought home upon the conſcience, can ever make a ſoul truely to know its miſery, and ſo to prize the remedy which is provided: for without a ſoul

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knows he is ſick, he will not improve a phyſician; 'till he knows he is a priſoner he will not welcome a proclamation of liberty; and 'till he is convinced of his great and juſt debts, and that he has *nothing to pay*, he will not *love much* when they are all *frankly forgiven*, Luk. 4. 18. & 5. 31. & 7. 42.

4 God's call conveys light and life to the ſoul, when and where he pleaſeth. When *Ezekiel* viewed the bones that were very dry, he propheſied, as he was commanded, and ſaid, *O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord*: and how glorious was the effect? The divine call is, *Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead, and Chriſt ſhall give thee light*, Eph. 5. 14. So our apoſtle after mentioning, that every good gift cometh from the father of lights, who of *his own will begets* ſouls with the *word of truth*, ſays *wherefore, let every man be ſwift to hear*, Jam. 1. 17 &c.

Here therefore let us obſerve that true teaching ever ſhews our conſtant obligation to conform to every divine rule; and at the ſame time, that all our help ſo to do, muſt be freely received from Chriſt Jeſus, by the influence of the holy ſpirit. From thence we receive the *gift of righteouſneſs*, whereby all our crimes are forgiven; and *abundance of grace*, whereby our natures are charged, and our ſouls are enabled to die unto ſin, and live unto righteouſneſs. But falſe teaching will either *abate* part of the price, in order to accomodate our duty to our ability; or elſe excuſe the creature from his *obligation*, becauſe he is not able to fulfil it.

This difference appears plain in all ages. When *Joſhua* in a moving manner had preſſed home upon *Iſrael* the importance of chuſing that day whom they would ſerve, and which had ſuch effect, that the people anſwered, *we will ſerve the Lord*:—he immediately

diately adds, *ye cannot ſerve the Lord; for he is an holy God.* Joſhua 24. 15—19. He would have them know their impotency, and their need of divine help.

The prophets orders were, *Tell ye; there is no God elſe beſide me, a juſt God and a Savior. Look unto me and be ye ſaved, all ye ends of the earth.— Surely ſhall one ſay, in the Lord have I righteouſneſs and ſtrength.* Strength as well as righteouſneſs *in* him, and not in ourſelves. So our Redeemer when he came, inſiſted much on the ſtrictneſs and authority of the divine command, and our conſtant obligation to obedience; and at the ſametime, he as fully aſſerted, that *without* him we *can do nothing*, Mat 5 Joh. 15. While the leaders of moſt note in that day, *abated* the terms in various ſhapes. They would confine the law, only to outward actions; but Jeſus extends it to our inward diſpoſition, and deſigns: they would have an obſervance of ſmall things anſwer, while they neglected the *weightier matters of the law*: yea, they would fain have their *forms of devotion* ſuffice, while they exerciſed *injuſtice* and *cruelty* towards the *poor*. Yet they could not bear the thoughts of periſhing any more than others: no, they often enquired what *good things they ſhould do* for eternal life? And can the words *goſpel, faith* or *repentance* help theſe in the leaſt who deal with ſouls in this *partial* line; and can their caſe be a whit better than thoſe who of old had been *partial in the law*? Mal. 2. 9. Yea, and is not *juſtice, mercy* and *faithfulneſs* as much neglected now under a profeſſion of chriſtianity, as ever they were among the *Jews*? *Paul* ſaw theſe things creeping in, and therefore ſays, *Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteouſneſs and ſin not; for ſome have not the knowledge of God: I ſpeak this to your ſhame.* 1 Cor. 15. 33. 34.

But here many of our late reasoners, will tell us that we make men mere machines, who are not worthy of praise or blame: for what we *cannot* do, we are not to blame for neglecting; and if we are actuated by divine power in all that is done right, then we are not praise-worthy therefor.

Answer 1. God is the author and supporter of all nature, who *giveth to all life breath and all things*; and *heathens* as well as *christians*, derive a *natural* power from him to do *natural* actions; and by that power they may do many things which are *materially* good; but in order for any action to be *spiritually* good, it must be done from a right principle, and to a right end, without which the *end of the commandment* is not answered, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5.

2 This controversy proceeds upon the same footing of that between *Job* and his friends, namely, *darkning counsel with words without knowledge*: using words without knowing what they mean; for the words *cannot*, are *not able* and such like, are as different in their meaning when used about the soul, from what they are about the body, as the nature of the soul differs from the body * We may be heartily willing to do many outward actions, which yet we cannot do, and so are excused from blame in our not doing them: but the cause why souls cannot believe the record which God has given of his son, and love and obey him with all their hearts, is because, *they love darkness rather than light*; yea, *they hate the light*, Joh. 3. 19, 20. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God*, &c. Rom. 8. 7. This is the account which Jehovah has given of the case, and those who dare to set up their reason

* See Mr. *Edwards* on the will, page 307. A book which has afforded more light to my mind in these points, than any other human composure that I ever read.

reaſon againſt this account, will ſooner or later hear that tremendous demand, *ſhall he that contendeth with the almighty, inſtruct him? he that reproveth God, let him anſwer it.*

What ſouls will dare to ſtand the trial, and come up and tell the moſt High that they *cannot* believe him, and therefore he muſt excuſe them from blame in *making* HIM A LIAR! * Or tell HIM that they cannot ſee beauties enough in HIM to attract *all their hearts*, and therefore he muſt *abate his law*, and take up with *bodily exerciſe*, take up with a ſhewing *much love* with their *mouths*, while their *heart goeth after their covetouſneſs*? † Many are ready to call this *rough* or *harſh* preaching; but this is no new thing, they called it ſo in *Iſaiah*'s day and ſaid, *ſpeak unto us ſmooth things; cauſe the holy one of* Iſrael *to ceaſe from before us.* The near views of a *holy God*, tore off their *covering* which was *not of his ſpirit*, and that they would not bare; therefore the prophet was ordered to *note it in a book that it* might *be for time to come, for ever and ever, that theſe were a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.* Iſa. 30 1, 8,—11. And the day is haſtning when an awful tempeſt *ſhall ſweep away the refuge of lies: now therefore be ye not mockers leſt your bands be made ſtrong*, Iſ i. 28. 17, 22.

O therefore precious ſouls, make no more attempts to hide from God, but ſubmit to him and embrace his free ſalvation without delay. Doſt thou ſay, I can't believe? let that teach thee what a heart thou haſt, which has often regarded *lying vanities*, and yet now can't believe the *God of truth* Do you ſay, I can believe there is mercy for others, but not for me? Why not for thee? oh, becauſe I am a great ſinner!

* Joh. 5. 10 † Ezek. 131.3.

That is thou canſt not believe, becauſe thou art juſt ſuch a creature as Jeſus came to ſave! 1 Tim. 1. 15. The bottom of the matter is we can believe that Chriſt came to ſave *good* ſinners, but not *bad* ones: ſuch as have nothing elſe but badneſs. Hence the profligate perſon thinks he believes the goſpel, and hopes for mercy at laſt, becauſe in the midſt of all his extravagance he conceits. he has an *honeſt* heart, & God regards *honeſty*, & hates *hypocrites*. So in every caſe men conceit they have ſome good either of an inward or outward nature, which will when it is well improved move Chriſt to ſave them Yet when the divine ſpirit ſhews them truly what they are, this takes away all that ſort of faith.

We naturally imagine that God is *altogether* like *ourſelves*, who cannot love thoſe whom we ſee no lovlineſs in: tho' the truth is that his thoughts and ways are as high above ours, as the heavens are above the earth. The contention in our day, concerning a *general*, and a *particular* faith centers here: for they don't contend concerning who is the Savior; but the diſpute is concerning what faith gives an intereſt in him. Multitudes hold that if we believe the goſpel to be true, and walk according to the rules of it, we may hope for mercy at laſt; tho' they will ſcarce allow any to know they are ſafe till they leave this world; and for this plain reaſon, becauſe their hope depends upon their *doing well* to the end. Others hold ſaving faith to be a perſuaſion that *Chriſt died for me in particular*, and that this perſuaſion muſt be *wrought up*, by the ſpirit's aſſiſtance in our hearts.

Now each party can ſee *ſelf* and man's *doings* in the others faith; therefore they have carried their contentions to a great length. Yet after all, when any poor ſoul has his eyes opened, and is turned *from dar-*

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neſs to light, all their criticiſms will never perſuade him to wait till next year, and ſee what effect light and heat have upon him, before he may *appropriate* the benefits of the glorious *Sun* to himſelf. * If a number of *rebels* ſhould lift up their arms against their king till many of them were ſlain, and the reſt ſcattered in the wilderneſs, ready to periſh, and they ſhould hear that he had granted out a proclamation of free pardon to rebels, and a general call to come in and accept it: yet if they ſtill kept off, how vain would all their diſputes or attempts prove, to find out who of them ſhould be ſaved by the King's mercy, tho' in the mean time if he ſhould *appear* to any of them in his royal robes, and with his charming voice proclaim *pardon to them*; how would it melt their hearts, and engage each of them to ſtrive who ſhould ſhew the loweſt ſubmiſſion, and the higheſt gratitude for his undeſerved mercy? See *Jer.* 31. 2, 3.

In theſe debates the ideas of a *dead* or *abſent* friend unawares ſlips into our minds, who has left choice legacies to a ſelect number of perſons, where there is room for lawyers, diſputes and men's judgments in order to determine who are intereſted therein. Whereas, did we obſerve that they which *find grace in the wilderneſs*, are ſuch as the Lord hath *appeared unto*, and declares his *everlaſting love* to *their ſouls*; and that we never can ſee the ſun only by its own light, which always brings its evidence with it, both of its own excellency, and of our right to enjoy its benefits; this would ſettle the point. Here ſome are ready to cry out, "If all our help is in God, and if he has determined to give it only to ſuch perſons as he hath "choſen; then 'tis in vain for us to ſtrive, or uſe means

* Pſal. 84. 11. Act. 26. 18.

" means, we will e'en take our eaſe and live as we " liſt". This many call *reaſoning*; and as one told Dr. *Taylor* (who has written much in this line, all the cry is *reaſon* and *candour*, *reaſon* and *candour*! and ſaid he, thou meaneſt no leſs by it than they did who cried, *Great is Diana of the Epheſians*! Yet if this noiſe was ſtilled, we may find a *ſelf-contradiction* in the very nature of the objection: * for it is in effect to ſay, "The meaſure of my future happineſs is fixed; " therefore I will take methods to increaſe it". or plainer ſtill: " God has determined what happineſs I " ſhall have, therefore I will take my own ways, and " not his to promote it"! Every man is uſing ſome ſort of means or other for happineſs every day he lives; ſo that the query is not properly whether we ſhall uſe any means, or no; but whether 'tis beſt to uſe the means which God has appointed, or thoſe which *man has invented*? †

This ſort of *reaſoning* began near the *forbidden tree*; and generally they who moſt *poſitively* deny their concern in what was *acted there*, ſhew moſt *plainly* that they *allow of the deed of their father*, by giving in to *reaſonings* againſt what God *hath* plainly *ſaid*, as he did. How is the world ranſacked, and the faults of profeſſors on all hands brought up, and many falſe charges added thereto, and all to guard againſt taking and regarding God's truth as he has delivered it? yea rather than yield; the *pit below* is ſearched, and *Judas* is brought up to carry on the argument againſt a cloſe adherence to divine rule in our practice in church affairs. As if *Judas*'s example was for *imitation* inſtead of *warning*. Tho' truely he had never had any place in the *chriſtian* church, as diſtinct from the *Jewiſh* church; for his commiſſion was limited to the

* vid. Mr. Edwards on the will p 316. † Eccl. 7. 29

the *houſe of Iſrael*, before their *national church* was diſſolved: and the great commiſſion to *teach* and *baptize all nations*, was given to the *eleven*; there was no *Judas* among them, *Mat.* 10. 5, 6. & 28. 19, 19.

It is therefore our higheſt wiſdom to acknowledge our own guilt and folly, and freely receive the divine teſtimony as 'tis delivered to us, and preſent our bodies a living ſacrifice to God, which is our *reaſonable ſervice*. Even *ſelf intereſt*, if rightly view'd would move us hereto. For if we diſregard the *golden rule*, the Lord will; not who ſays *with what meaſure ye mete, it* SHALL *be meaſured to you again*. Had *David* viewed this when he was tempted to defile his neighbours wife, and then *deceitfully* to ſhed his blood; and had he ſeen that this would be *meaſured* to him *double*: that one ſon would defile his daughter, and another murder him; and then that the murderer would *deceitfully* dethrone *David*, and openly defile his wives; with what indignation would he have rejected that *traveller* which came to entice him thereto?

Yet becauſe this *ſentence is not immediately executed*, ſinners will not quit their evil ways: yea when they ſee the execution of it *begin at the houſe of God*, upon *the righteous*, they *reaſon* directly againſt *revelation*, and conclude that the awful *ſentence* will not reach to *ungodly ſinners* who *obey not the goſpel of God*. They are *willingly ignorant* of the true nature and deſign of all God's diſpenſations, 1 *Pet.* 4. 17, 18. 2 *Pet.* 3. 5. Let me therefore addreſs you in the language of wiſdom it ſelf, "Hear inſtruction "and be wiſe, and refuſe it not: for whoſo findeth "me findeth life, and ſhall obtain favour of the Lord. "But he that *ſinneth* againſt me wrongeth his own "ſoul: all they that *hate* me, *love death*, Prov. 8. "33—36.

I thought to have ſtopt here; but a review of our preſent ſtate conſtrains me to go farther. For as we are loudly called to *awake out of ſleep*, ſo we are called to ſtir up one another, and to *provoke one another to love and good works*. Many are ſtiring up one another to evil, and it might make us all aſhamed to think that ſinners are more active in the way to deſtruction; than ſaints are in the way to ſalvation. We can ſcarce go into any company without hearing talk of others faults; yet how rare is faithful reproof? and why? we are afraid of giving offence: tho' when the report comes round to the perſons ears, the offence is double.

How little regard is paid to the divine rule, for dealing with a faulty brother in *Mat.* 18? *One* way by which many evade it is, that the *fault is ſecret*, and therefore they will not take theſe ſteps; yet they can whiſper it all round the church or neighbourhood. *Another* is that *many know it*, and ſo they would be excuſed from that method; whereas if the caſe be not openly *in the church*, as that was of the inceſtous man at *Corinth*, I know no other way to *bring it in* aright, but by theſe ſteps. and if any caſe be ſo *ſecret* that we may not open it in *that way*, it otght to remain *ſecret*: for the command is, *Debate thy cauſe with thy neighbour himſelf; and diſcover not a ſecret to another; leaſt he that heareth it, put thee to ſhame*, Prov. 25. 9, 10.

Nothing is more common than to hear men's faults aggravated in their abſence, beyond what they are in their preſence: and as Mr. *Morgan* obſerves "An "evil report, be it true or falſe, ſpreads much ta- "ſter than a good one; an evident token that moſt "men do not *love their neighbour* as they do *them- "ſeves*". But whence comes this averſion, to giving

and

and receiving reproof? surely not from a good cause; for, *rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee: and open rebuke is better than secret love.* 'Tis the *scorner that loveth not one that reproveth him*, Prov. 15, 12. Sin is our worst enemy, and if it has insnared us under any disguise whatsoever, 'tis a great kindness to have the enemy discovered and cast out. And if others are mistaken in their reproof; yet it can be no injury to have our *deeds tried and made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

We have lately been upon the borders of a civil war, for LIBERTY: hanging and burning were not too bad for the enemies of LIBERTY! Ah! little do many see what they are doing; for after all this noise? *Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin*, Joh. 8. 34. Such harbour the worst enemies to *liberty* in their own bosoms. *Turkish* or *Spanish slaves* are not to be compared with those who are under the *bondage of corruption. Covetousness* will make men *rise early, sit up late* and *eat the bread of carefulness*; and if they have grasped much together, their *abundance will not suffer them to sleep*: it will drive them to cheat, lye, steal, and kill, and has brought many to a *halter*, and ten thousands more to *hell. Pride* moves men to manifold works of deceit, to advance *self*, and crush others; and when its views are crossed, it breaks out into wars and fightings with tongue, pen, club, or sword, and fills societies, countries, or kingdoms, with confusion, blood, or desolation. *Luxury* draws persons in many ways to waste their estate, health and time, under a notion of *pleasure*, and often brings on a *speedy*, if not *untimely death*, and an *aggravated damnation.*

Yet thoſe who thus *weary themſelves to commit iniquity*, often treat ſuch as enemies who would labour to convince, them of and turn them from this dreadful *ſlavery*. Every company ſounds with complaints of *hard times*;—*debts*, and *want of means to pay them:* whereas had we the means that have been *conſumed upon theſe luſts*, among us in ten years paſt, and could we *uſe them*, and not *abuſe them*, we ſhould be as happy as any people on earth: but in vain do we look for *peace* while we harbour ſuch *enemies*; or for liberty, while we *yield our ſelves to ſerve ſin*, and are not in earneſt to improve all goſpel means to ſearch out theſe *cruel foes*. I ſpeak not thus becauſe I am free of blame therein. No, rather, (as Col. *Gardiner* ſaid) becauſe I have been ſo *ſcandalouſly befooled* by them.

We glory much in our *liberty of conſcience*; yet how little is that underſtood among us? * The true nature of it is, when we have delivered our ſentiments and the grounds of them; then to ſay with *Paul*, *Judge ye what I ſay*. But what is more common than for us to go a ſtep further, and judge for others as well as our ſelves, and if they do not concur with our judgment, to treat them with contempt or abuſe? Yea, and civil privileges, or juſt dues are often witheld, only becauſe others ſentiments differ from ours. All the difference between this and ancient *perſecution* is, that *then* the *tyrant* was upon the *throne*, but *now* he is come down to the footſtool; *then* he took away life; but

* Good conſcience men allow (they ſay)
but muſt be underſtood,
To ſay as they themſelves do ſay;
or elſe it can't be good. *Geddard.*

but *now* he is restrain'd from going so far. *Paul* says, *Whatsoever is reproved is made manifest by light.* Other methods therefore than holding forth *light*, or *speaking the truth in love*, have not a good, but evil tendency. Since I have ventured thus far, I will proceed a little farther, and observe that as to christian union, *John* loved the saints *in the truth*; and we are commanded *to love the truth and peace.* Therefore to pursue *peace with all men*, as far as we can consistent with *truth*, is an incumbent duty: but to wrong the *truth* for *peace*; to wrong our own consciences to please others, is an awful sort of liberty!

The prince of peace calls to arms against sin, and there is *no discharge in this war*, any more than in that which will come by and by. No, the Prince declares, *He that is not with me, is against me.* * Surely then, my brethren, it is *high time to awake out of sleep*, and *cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light*; † and no longer follow our blind inclinations, or others inticements, because we *don't know* this or that to be wrong; but pursue what we *do know* is right: and make this our daily cry, § *That which I see not teach thou me, if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.* Does the multitude of inward and outward foes cause thee to cry, *Alas, what shall we do?* the answer is ready, *Fear not; for they that be with us, are more than they that be with them* ‖ The Lord tells us what the controversy is, and that all shall know the issue of it; says he, they *shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs.* ¶ He calls us to trust and obey his word, tho' rulers, fathers, mothers, wife or children say the contrary; and tho' we loose house, lands, or life in

but

* Mat. 12. 30. † Rom. 13 11, 12. § Job 34. 32.
‖ 2 Kin. 6. 15, 16. ¶ Jer. 44. 28.

the cauſe: And he that will turn from truth for any or all of theſe, CANNOT *be* Chriſt's *diſciple.* *

Worldly wiſdom ſays, *This is too much*, and when it comes to the trial, many *go away ſorrowful*, not being able to endure ſo *great a fight of affliction.* But faith computes things quite in another line. I remember a ſtory of a great commander, that when an account of his army was brought to him, in order to ſhew that their number was not ſo great as their enemies, he ſays, "And how many thouſands did you reckon ME for". Unbelief leaves the *captain of our ſalvation* out of the account: but faith views him as *all in all*, ſo that if it ſees, *violence, iniquity*, and *grievance*, ſo that the *law is ſlacked, and judgment doth* not *go forth*, becauſe the *wicked doth compaſs about the righteous*; yet it ſees HIS *glory cover the heavens, and the earth was full of* HIS *praiſe.* HE *ſtood and meaſured the earth,* HE *beheld and drave aſunder the nations*, and *ſcatters the mountains and hills.* HIS *ways are everlaſting.* Then let natures ſupplies all fail, yet the believer will, *joy in the God of his ſalvation.* Hab. 1 2—4 & 3, 3, 6, 17, 18.

Faith puts ſelf out of the queſtion, and cries, *Lord it is nothing with thee to help whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us O Lord our God; for we reſt on thee, and in thy name we go againſt this multitude: O Lord, thou art our God, let not man prevail againſt* THEE. In this may God's people *out of weakneſs wax valient in fight, and*

* *Luk.* 14 26, 27.

and turn to flight a thousand thousand ememies, 2 Chron. 14. 9, 11. Every believer has the faced three, the armies of heaven, and all the good men upon earth on his side; and divine power and faithfulness have engaged to make all the attempts both of his carnal and spiritual foes to work for his good. * While the unbelievers party consists of the *prisoners of darkness*, and a multitude of *worms* who are *crushed before the moth*, Jude 6. Job. 4. 19. † it is high time therefore for us all to have done both with lukewarmness and cowardice in this cause; and while many are extolling the courage of carnal men, let us be *valient for the truth upon the earth*, &c.

Every

* Rom 8. 28. 2 Cor. 4. 17.

† *Jer.* 9. 3

Hark yet again you carnal men,
  and hear what I shall say,
In your own dialect, and then
  i'll you no longer stay.

2 You talk sometimes of valour much
  and count those bravely man'd,
Who will not stick to have a touch
  with any in the land.

Tho' you dare crack a cowards crown,
  or quarrel for a Pin,
You dare not on the wicked frown,
  nor *speak against their sin.*

Know then true courage there doth dwell,
  where men engage for God,
Against the devil, death, and hell,
  and bear the wickeds rod.

Bunyan.

Every one wants to be *happy*. Well we have the teſtimony of truth itſelf, that " If ye know theſe " things, *happy* are ye if ye do them. " And the " *work* of righteouſneſs ſhall be *peace*, and the " *effect* of righteouſneſs, *quietneſs* and *aſſurance* for " ever. AMEN.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

TITLE page r. prefixed. p. 11, margin r. Loretto, l. 6 fr. bot. r Ladys l 4 r *are as* p 12 l 2 fr bot. r *thoſe* p 13. l 9 r *as fully* l 12 r *plainly* p 14 l 20 r *harden* p 17 l 1 r *by I come* l 22 begins a Paragraph. p 25 l 5 fr bot. r appear p 27 l 12 not r *He* p 33 l 8 r *confirmed* p 34 l 2 fr. bot. r *his*: p 38 margin r *Dr. Watts* p 40 l 8 fr bot r. *leſt*. p 43 l 4 r *theſe* l 8 r *remark* p 45 l 11 r *have* l 26 r whom p 50 l 22 f. *in* r *is* p 51 l 8 not r *got* p 55 l 6 for *the* r *this* l 18 r *lepers* p 56 l 21 r *the Fathers* p 58 l 18 r *Jews & Gentiles* p 60 l 23 r *He ſays* p 61 l 26 r *a Time* p 62 l 2 r *Doctrine* l 9 r *purſuit* p 65 l 14 f *them* r *theſe* p 67 l 1 r *are* p 68 marg laſt line for *Counſel* r *Council* p 70 l 10 *for to diſtinguiſh* r *to point out* l 18 for *them* r *theſe* p 71 l 7 r *and that too* p 72 l 14 r *ye* marg l 3 r *if ſo* p 77 marg laſt l f *which* r *whom* p 80 l 25 f *charged* r *changed* p 84 l 34 r *in* p 87 l 11 r *the Lord will not.*

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